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THE LEGION'S PONY EXPRESS

American Legion Riders from multiple states organized their own Legacy Scholarship fundraising rides in lieu of this year's canceled Legacy Run. The Pony Express left California on Oct. 7 and covered 2,300 miles over seven days. It started with three Riders in Los Angeles, and grew to 35 motorcyclists plus passengers by the time it arrived in Indianapolis on Oct. 13. National Commander Bill Oxford greeted the Pony Express at American Legion National Headquarters, where participants delivered $83,562 in contributions. Donations for this year's virtual Legacy Run will be accepted through Dec. 31. Photo by Ben Mikesell

legion.org/riders/legacyrun/donation

ON THE COVER

Navy ships participate in the Pearl Harbor Holiday Festival of Lights at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii. DoD

The American Legion Magazine, a leader among national general-interest publications, is published monthly by The American Legion for its nearly 2 million members. These wartime veterans, working through 12,000 community-level posts, dedicate themselves to God and Country and traditional American values; strong national security; adequate and compassionate care for veterans, their widows and orphans; community service; and the wholesome development of our nation's youth.

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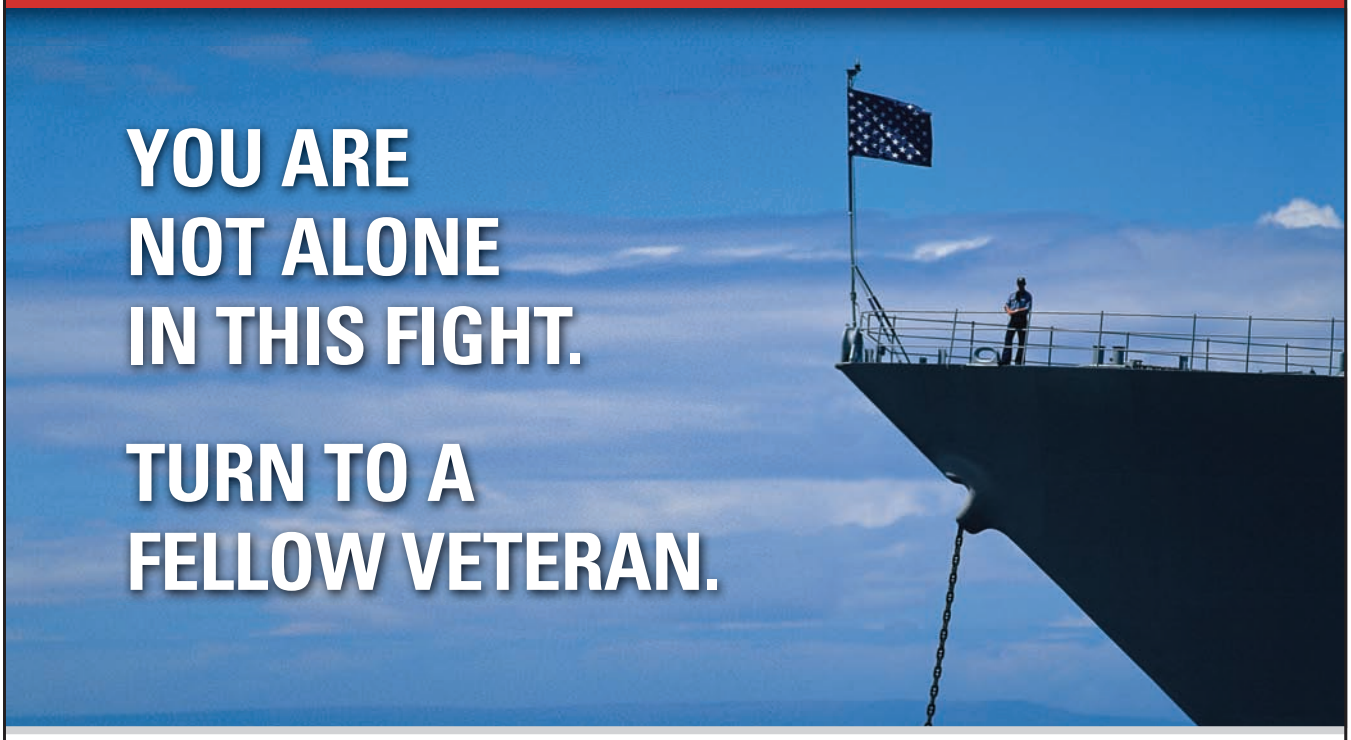

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'Separated We Survive'

In his article on the pandemic (October), Alan W. Dowd seems to side with "public-health patriots" or PHPs, for they "love their ... countrymen so much that they're willing to limit freedom," while "individual-liberty patriots," or ILPs, "bristle at limits." Some ILPs read science showing the mask useless, and love our countrymen enough to lead against submission to inappropriate government orders.

– Ross Riggs, Louisville, Ohio

Before looking elsewhere, we must first look at ourselves as in a mirror. I read this article three times. Much was stated about patriotism, blame, seeking a common enemy and the concept of freedom. But duty, honor and country, in my opinion, define patriotism, and better yet, define being an American.

My father and uncles served in World War I and World War II. My cousins were Korean War and Vietnam War veterans. Do you think they or other veterans felt they needed to choose between individual freedom or our country? Some volunteered. Some were called to serve. Either way, they served this country before enjoying the freedoms they fought for.

This time we are in a different type of war, one that so far has cost over 200,000 lives. I do not agree that those who oppose the COVID-19 lockdowns do so in defense of freedom, which is supposedly patriotic.

Alan W. Dowd blames the Chinese, saying that Beijing "intentionally or incompetently ... allowed a local public-health problem to mushroom into a global pandemic." Referring back to the mirror analogy, the current administration and the pandemic could be inserted into the above statement. Our military accepts accountability and responsibility. Why can't our civilian leaders?

There is no such thing as "public-health patriots" or "individual-freedom patriots." There is only one kind of patriot: that selfless individual who is willing to sacrifice for others. That's being an American, and yes, in many cases that person is a hero.

If we are seeking unity, we must sometimes accept sacrifice that is more often than not temporary, in order to forge a country with long-lasting roots to fight future wars of all types.

– Robert L. Kasprzycki, Cazenovia, N.Y.

Science is easy to accept when it gives us better machines, homes, clothes and technology, but when it tells us something that bangs against our "liberty" box, it suddenly becomes an opinion. We need to recognize how poorly we were prepared and get our "Sierra" together.

– Terry Brown, Vancouver, Wash.

'A Right Like No Other'

Please pass on to National Commander Bill Oxford my kudos on his Commander's Message (October). Outstanding in every respect and word. I will vote, as I always do. God bless America!

– Joe Gray, Colorado Springs, Colo.

U.S. membership in NATO

The time for us to withdraw from NATO is long overdue (Big Issues, October). Even during the Cold War, many of these allies did not support us (Grenada, the Libya raid). NATO was created to protect Western Europe from the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union is gone. No need for NATO.

– Joe Domhan, West Babylon, N.Y.

I shared this article with my nephew, who worked shoulder to shoulder with NATO personnel from a variety of countries. They impressed him as people of honor, aware of the grave responsibility in opposing Soviet hegemony and gracious partners in the cooperation that forms our alliance. Another point he made is that NATO countries provide us with something strategically paramount: forward bases.

– Lejames E. Suess, Jackson, Calif.

Ted Galen Carpenter argues in support of retiring NATO, with plausible data. However, he does not suggest or recommend a solution and/or replacement. Personally, I don't want enemy submarines in the Hudson River or the Chesapeake Bay.

It is obvious that NATO members need the United States, the world's most powerful nation, and desire NATO to remain intact and strengthened by its total membership. And I believe the majority of NATO countries would help the United States when needed.

– Richard P. Pisarcik, Phoenixville, Pa.

'Present Tense, Future Bright'

Steve Brown makes some valid points but takes an excessively rosy look at the situation (September). He says the U.S. economy can take a punch and continue business, but this is based on two faulty assumptions. The first is that consumerism, i.e. runaway consumption, is a good thing; but if one large nation (the United States) stops acting like a group of drunken spendthrifts, the system collapses. The second is that running up trillions of dollars in debt is acceptable.

Brown praises digital medical appointments, but I wonder whether he has ever experienced one. Such appointments consist of question-and-answer sessions; there is no examination at all. You never see so much as a stethoscope, never mind a check of those skin lesions that were such a concern for you and your doctor at your last appointment.

Finally, Brown says that "anywhere" workers will redefine the economy, but we know how that has worked out. We call for technical support and get someone half a world away who is paid pennies an hour to read from a script and (usually) give bad advice.

We were headed for hard times before the virus escaped from China, spread around the world and made things even worse. We have coped because we've had to, but let's not pretend the new situation will be better.

– James M. Castro, Helena, Mont.

The namesake of 'America's Soviet ship'

Regarding the piece on USNS *Lance Cpl. Roy M. Wheat* (Rapid Fire, October), Wheat was a native of Moselle, Miss. He arrived in Vietnam in March 1967, and was assigned duty as a rifleman with Company K, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division. His unit participated in numerous combat operations, including DeSoto, Webster, Arizona, Butler and Gem. Wheat was 20 years old when he died, and he is buried at Eastabuchie Cemetery in Mississippi. The enlisted dining facility at Naval Air Station Meridian was named after Wheat in 1985, and Interstate 59 in Mississippi is named the Roy Wheat Memorial Highway.

– Richard Eckert Sr., Ocean Springs, Miss.

Editor's note: The American Legion post in Texas named for Dorie Miller is Post 817 in Beaumont (September).

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Ongoing help for veterans, children

I asked, and you responded.

In my September Commander's Message, I asked American Legion Family members and friends to journey 100 miles for veterans and children. I say "journey" because it really wasn't important to me whether you walked, ran, biked, swam, rowed or surfed. It was the why, not the how, that mattered.

By late October, more than 4,700 had registered for our 100 Miles for Hope challenge. The campaign, which ran through Veterans Day, raised funds for The American Legion's Veterans & Children Foundation.

There is never a bad time to support two of our organization's founding pillars: veterans and children. But during the COVID-19 pandemic, both groups are facing tremendous hardships.

The V&CF provides Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) grants to eligible veterans and military members with minor children at home. It also funds valuable training for American Legion service officers, who work tirelessly to help veterans obtain the benefits they have earned.

The veterans unemployment rate is nearly double what it was a year ago. Those who worked for, or own, small businesses have been hit especially hard. Yet the need to provide food, health care and shelter for their children continues even if those veterans' income is cut off. This is where The American Legion can demonstrate "our devotion to mutual helpfulness."

The pandemic isn't the only recent emergency to tax TFA's resources. During the prolonged government shutdown in 2019, the Legion's Veterans & Children Foundation provided more than $1 million in grants to Coast Guard families who were affected by interruptions in their pay. Requests for TFA grants also increase when hurricanes, wildfires and other natural disasters devastate communities.

I have been inspired by the hundreds of stories I've heard from dedicated participants of our 100 Miles for Hope campaign. One message that stands out was posted by Legionnaire Michael Klasno of Kingwood, Texas, on Aug. 22.

"I am a Gold Star Dad running in honor of my son, Army Sgt. Rhys W. Klasno, killed in action 13 May 2007 in Haditha, Iraq. I'm a 69-year-old Marine veteran who just had open-heart surgery on June 13. I am just starting a walking regimen, with two miles per day. This 100-mile commitment may take me a while, but I will make the Veterans Day deadline. Semper Fi."

The 100 Miles for Hope challenge ended on Veterans Day, but there's always a need for the help provided by the Veterans & Children Foundation. I recently appointed Past National Commander Denise Rohan to chair a steering committee with a mission to raise $25 million to ensure a robust and sustaining Veterans & Children Foundation capable of responding to future emergencies.

The generosity of the American Legion Family continues to amaze me. You can support this important mission by visiting **legion.org/donate**.

James W. "Bill" Oxford

National Commander James W. "Bill" Oxford

MEMORANDA

HOLIDAY DONOR BLOOD DRIVE

The American Legion's Holiday Donor Blood Drive runs from Nov. 26 to Dec. 31. According to the 2019-2020 Consolidated Post Report, 48,100 donors gave 73,952 pints of blood during the past membership year. This is a marked increase from the previous year; in response to the pandemic, a number of American Legion posts stood up emergency blood drives in the spring and summer.

legion.org/security/blood

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**I was about to give up…
I wouldn't have known where to go.**

Korean War Army veteran Willie Alvin Cousin,
who received long-overdue and wrongly denied VA disability benefits after his case was reopened and won by American Legion Department Service Officer K. Robert Lewis

FOR MILITARY AND VETERAN FAMILIES IN NEED

These were important things. It helped them not get behind in their rent… It helped them put food in the refrigerator.

Coast Guard Vice Commandant Adm. Charlie Ray
after American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance helped more than 3,120 children whose active-duty families were affected by the federal government shutdown

Your gift provides hope for disabled veterans and children in need.

The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation, formerly the American Legion Endowment Fund, delivers vital financial support for service officers worldwide who are working on VA disability claims for more than 700,000 U.S. military veterans at any one time, all the time. The fund also supplies American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance cash grants for military and veteran families with minor children at home, who have encountered hardships beyond their control and need short-term help covering the costs of shelter, food, utilities, clothing or other necessities.

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"As a combat veteran, I know the challenges our servicemembers face after returning to civilian life. In the Senate, I've continued to work across the aisle to support these heroes by expanding access to mental health services."

American Legion member and U.S. Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, a retired officer who led troops in Kuwait and Iraq, after introducing a bill calling on VA to designate a national Buddy Check week to reach out to veterans possibly struggling with mental health. The measure is modeled after the successful Buddy Check program of The American Legion, which was launched in March 2019 and became standard practice for hundreds of posts during the COVID-19 pandemic.

$83,562

Amount in American Legion Legacy Scholarship donations delivered to National Commander James W. "Bill" Oxford on Oct. 13 by participants in the 2,300-mile Pony Express Ride from California through the Southwest and Midwest, ending at National Headquarters in Indianapolis

▶ $23,000

Amount raised by the Department of North Carolina's American Legion Riders in-state Legacy Run Oct. 1-3, a record for the department. The four-route ride drew 94 participants from North Carolina and another 44 from five other states, in support of the 15th Annual Legacy Run for the American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund, which assists the children of U.S. military men and women who died or became 50 percent or greater disabled on active duty since 9/11.

▶ 65

Number of American Legion National Emergency Fund grants approved and disbursed in 2020 through Oct. 8, totaling $114,848. The 25 named storms represented the second-highest number of named storms in a year in U.S. history.

OUR WWII STORY

A collection of OUR WWII STORY articles and photos about The American Legion's place in the Second World War can be found at **legion.org/centennial**. They are available to share or reprint in post, district or department media.

A rising tide of Blue Water Navy Agent Orange approvals

Nine months after VA began processing Agent Orange disability claims for Blue Water Navy veterans, more than 22,500 were finalized by early October, resulting in more than $640 million in payments to veterans or their surviving dependents.

Blue Water Navy veterans waited nearly 50 years to receive disability compensation for diseases related to Agent Orange exposure until the American Legion-backed Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019 was signed into law. The act extends disability benefits covering medical conditions associated with Agent Orange exposure to those who served on ships off the coast of Vietnam, affecting an estimated 90,000 veterans.

The American Legion has long fought for fair treatment of Blue Water Navy veterans. In 2016, the Legion passed Resolution No. 246, which supported "legislation to amend Title 38, United States Code, to presume exposure to Agent Orange for any military personnel who served during the Vietnam War on any vessel that came within 12 nautical miles of the coastlines of Vietnam."

Veterans who want to file an initial claim for an herbicide-related disability can use VA Form 21-526EZ, Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits. American Legion service officers – who can be contacted at **legion.org/serviceofficers** – are available to assist any veteran with the application process.

– Mackenzie Wolf

Photo by Clay Lomneth

2B Joe Morgan (1943-2020)

- American Legion Baseball, Post 471, Oakland, Calif.
- **22** Major League Baseball seasons
- **2** National League MVP awards, 1975 and 1976
- **2** MLB World Series championships
- **10** All-Star Game selections
- **1990** Inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame
- **2017** Received The American Legion's James V. Day "Good Guy" Award for charitable work with youth

Photo by Callaghan O'Hare

"I told him if you need anybody to talk to, day or night, call me. My phone is right by my bed."

American Legion Department of Texas District 7 Commander Jeanette Merritt, after presenting a home elliptical machine to Marine Corps veteran Joshua Barton on Oct. 8 in Spring, Texas, thanks to an American Legion Operation Comfort Warriors grant. Barton was severely injured when he was thrown from a vehicle while serving in Afghanistan.

▶ $740,889

Amount in American Legion Child Welfare Foundation grants awarded in September to 17 nonprofit organizations that work to improve the lives of children facing physical, mental, emotional, environmental and spiritual challenges

FROM NATIONAL TO YOU

Photo by Lucas Carter

Service officer resources

More than 3,000 accredited American Legion service officers work tirelessly every day to provide veterans and their families free assistance navigating and applying for VA benefits and more. Training and certification are required for accreditation status.

Thousands more volunteers are post service officers, who provide referrals for veterans and their families but do not file claims on their behalf or act with power of attorney.

The American Legion Post Service Officer Guide clarifies the important role post service officers play, along with their relationship to accredited department service officers.

The American Legion Service Officer Code of Procedure provides legal requirements necessary to represent veterans and their families in claims applications. These include rules on power-of-attorney status, confidentiality, contested claims and more.

Download and print both publications from the American Legion publications page online:

legion.org/publications

To find an accredited American Legion service officer, visit the online directory online:

legion.org/serviceofficers

"A lot of what we do is planning with veterans on how to approach their claims. This training was invaluable .... The DSO program is run and operated by lawyers that have a deep understanding of the claims and benefits process. The best part about the training was learning the insights and legal knowledge, and also how to apply that toward what we do."

American Legion Department of Washington Assistant Service Officer Lucas Bruner, one of 238 people who participated in an August virtual service officer training program presented by The American Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission and the Maryland law firm Bergmann & Moore, which specializes in disability claims and appeals for veterans

Media Bakery

OPEN WITH CARE

BY LANCE FRAZER

Veterans dealing with trauma and other serious issues must have the courage to be vulnerable.

A recent study has thrown new light on one of the most difficult issues in health care.

Nearly 50 percent of patients nationwide dealing with serious issues – domestic violence, sexual assault, depression and suicidal thoughts – do not disclose them to their physicians, says Angela Fagerlin of the University of Utah Health system, the study's senior author.

Reluctance to disclose these struggles can contribute to a staggering range of health problems, including loss of sleep (and accompanying health threats), high blood pressure, hypertension, elevated cardiac risk, drug and alcohol use, and more. But when so many patients are hesitant to be open with their doctors about their diet and exercise for fear of being lectured or judged, they can hardly be expected to open up about trauma and their mental health.

"So often, from the patient's point of view, they're dealing with issues like being judged as crazy, or this cultural belief we can't shake that when you talk to your physician you're supposed to be talking about physical things," says Josh Klapow, a University of Alabama at Birmingham clinical psychologist.

Patients need to understand that it's the doctor's job to ask "Are you still smoking?" or "Why aren't you sticking to your medication schedule?" Fagerlin adds. "These other things are not something your doctor will lecture you about, and they're certainly not things on which you'll be judged."

Also difficult is pushing past the idea that no one can understand or help. Some of that comes from bad experiences with a doctor or health-care system, but patients need to know that their physicians have access to resources that can help them cope and heal. Veterans may face an additional hurdle, Klapow says.

Elizabeth Neilson of Morehead State University recently published a study indicating that veterans with "rigid adherence" to traditional masculinity may be at increased risk of developing PTSD, have more severe symptoms and be less likely to seek mental health treatment. She says that detailed analysis suggests the association "may specifically be caused by the veterans' belief that they should control and restrict their emotions. In other words, they should be tough."

Toughness is a valuable asset in the military, but to deal with issues like these, "it should be like an oxygen tank when you're scuba diving: use it when you need it, but when you're back on land, turn it off," Neilson says.

She recommends the films of Jackson Katz, an educator who has released several films (available on YouTube) exploring masculinity and masculine strength.

"Kudos to VA for the work they have done and continue to do, but the problem needs to continue to be addressed within the military system," Klapow says. "It needs to be emphasized that we understand you're trained to 'have grit,' but you also need to have the courage to be vulnerable.

"It's OK to be afraid. It's OK to tell your physician, 'Yeah, I have something to talk about, but I don't feel comfortable about doing it.' That's a start."

Fagerlin says her message to those struggling is that their primary care physicians can provide the help they need to live their best lives, "but your life can only be that way if you've the strength to be open with them. They're here to help, not to judge. You're not in this alone."

Lance Frazer is a California-based freelance writer specializing in health and medicine, science, nature and the environment.

Living Well is designed to provide general information. It is not intended to be, nor is it, medical advice. Readers should consult their physicians when they have health problems.

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BATTLEFIELD GUARDIAN ANGELS

Valkyrie transfusion program will save lives of front-line Marines, sailors.

BY MARINE CORPS 1ST LT. SYDNEY MURKINS

Navy Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Bryan Pascacio, with I Marine Expeditionary Force, seeks a vein to insert a needle during the Valkyrie Emergency Whole Blood Transfusion Training program at Camp Pendleton, Calif., on May 14.

U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Anabel Abreu Rodriguez

"Corpsmen are tasked with the grim reality of either restoring a person to life or taking them to their final resting place," says Lt. Cmdr. Russell Wier, former 1st Marine Division deputy division surgeon, on the genesis of "Valkyrie," a fresh-whole-blood (FWB) transfusion initiative designed to get more troops off the battlefield alive.

Wier, who served in Iraq as a casualty evacuation pilot, recalls the moment a CH-46E was shot down while transporting urgently needed blood to a remote surgical facility. The incident underscored the importance of having blood available in the battle space.

Years later, as a physician, Wier learned more about the possibility of conducting walking blood-bank operations at the unit level. Realizing its life-saving potential, he set out to bring FWB transfusion to the Marine Corps, and the Valkyrie program was born. "The ultimate goal is to make it a program of record, which will change the way Marines and corpsmen operate in future wars," Wier says.

Various aspects of trauma need to be treated during a massive hemorrhage, and that's why FWB is the preferred resuscitation fluid; it has clotting factors, acid binding and oxygen transportation capabilities. FWB is also warm, which addresses hypothermia. It replaces what the body is leaking out in a way that separated components or saline cannot.

About four months before deployment, a blood drive is conducted, giving physicians an opportunity to identify individuals with specific blood types. If potential donors meet the necessary criteria, their names are added to the unit's blood roster, and they receive cards that identify them as qualified donors.

For missions where casualties are likely, blood can be drawn in the field. "We need the option to draw blood on site, right before a mission, for transport on the backs of corpsmen," says Cmdr. Joseph Kotora, former division surgeon for the 2nd Marine Division.

The major risk is bodily rejection of the transfusion, "which is almost always due to clerical error, meaning the wrong blood type is administered to the patient," he adds. "We mitigate this by only drawing type O blood – the universal blood type – and then we ensure that it is tested, re-tested and then tested again."

Kotora expects the program will not want for donors. "The *esprit de corps* of being a Marine, and the unit camaraderie that Marines feel, is more than enough to make them want to contribute," he says.

The name "Valkyrie" comes from Norse mythology. Minor deities who soared over ancient battlefields, valkyries were said to decide which warriors died and which lived, and guided the fallen to Valhalla.

"I liked the imagery of it, that presence on the battlefield alongside the warrior," Wier says. "I think this program enhances our corpsmen's capacity to restore life."

Media Bakery

COVID-19's riskiest locations

Even as buzz grows of COVID-19 vaccines hitting the market, people in at-risk groups – cancer and heart patients, type 2 diabetics, people with kidney disease, sickle cell anemia or COPD, the immunocompromised, the obese and those older than 70 – still need to take precautions to protect their health. That includes remembering that they are more likely to be exposed to COVID-19 and other viruses at certain locations.

CDC data shows that restaurants, bars and gyms are among the riskiest places for at-risk groups. As *Self* magazine reports, a recent CDC study shows that people with COVID-19 infections were significantly more likely to report having visited a restaurant or bar in the previous two weeks than those without the infection. "Those who tested positive were also more likely to have visited a gym, but the difference was not as large."

- EDUCATIONAL ADVERTISEMENT -

Better read this if you are 62 or older and still making mortgage payments.

It's a well-known fact that for many older Americans, the home is their single biggest asset, often accounting for more than 45% of their total net worth. ***And with interest rates near all-time lows while home values are still high, this combination creates the perfect dynamic for getting the most out of your built-up equity.***

But, many aren't taking advantage of this unprecedented period. According to new statistics from the mortgage industry, senior homeowners in the U.S. are now sitting on more than 7.19 trillion dollars* of unused home equity.

Not only are people living longer than ever before, but there is also greater uncertainty in the ecomony. With home prices back up again, ignoring this "hidden wealth" may prove to be short sighted when looking for the best long-term outcome.

All things considered, it's not surprising that more than a million homeowners have already used a government-insured Home Equity Conversion Mortgage (HECM) loan to turn their home equity into extra cash for retirement.

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It's times like these that your largest asset can be a life saver.

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Although today's HECM loans have been improved to provide even greater financial protection for homeowners, there are still many misconceptions.

For example, a lot of people mistakenly believe the home must be paid off in full in order to qualify for a HECM loan, which is not the case. In fact, one key advantage of a HECM is that the proceeds will first be used to pay off any existing liens on the property, which frees up cash flow, a huge blessing for seniors living on a fixed income. Unfortunately, many senior homeowners who might be better off with a HECM loan don't even bother to get more information because of rumors they've heard.

In fact, a recent survey by American Advisors Group (AAG), the nation's number one HECM lender, found that over 98% of their clients are satisfied with their loans. While these special loans are not for everyone, they can be a real lifesaver for senior homeowners - especially in times like these.

The cash from a HECM loan can be used for almost any purpose. Other common uses include making home improvements, paying off medical bills or helping other family members. Some people simply need the extra cash for everyday expenses while others are now using it as a safety net for financial emergencies.

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CHAIN REACTION

The pandemic has America and the world rethinking their economic dependence on China.

BY ALAN W. DOWD

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed a glaring threat to U.S. public health and national security: dependence on the People's Republic of China (PRC) for critical equipment, technologies, products and medicines.

Although reliance on supply chains that originate or run through China is not a new problem, it appears policymakers are finally serious about addressing it. Just as the Soviet bloc's attempt to seize West Berlin and South Korea awakened the United States to the burdens of the Cold War, the PRC's criminal negligence in response to COVID-19 is altering both the trajectory of the U.S.-Chinese relationship and the supply chains that sustain America's economy.

Medicines and medical supplies Prior to COVID-19, 35.9 percent of America's antibiotics, 49.8 percent of its medical bandages, 71.7 percent of its textile facemasks and 77.2 percent of its plastic gloves originated in China, according to the Congressional Research Service (CRS). The biopharmaceutical industry adds that pre-pandemic, China produced 70 percent of the

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“China accounts for 73 percent of Microsoft’s inbound supplies, more than 60 percent of Dell’s and HP’s, and nearly 50 percent of IBM’s. These are among the federal government’s top information technology suppliers.”

acetaminophen used in America and 95 percent of America’s ibuprofen imports.

It doesn’t take a Clausewitz or Kissinger to recognize that these vulnerabilities could be exploited in a crisis. In fact, they already have been. American Enterprise Institute scholars Daniel Blumenthal and Nicholas Eberstadt report that China “quietly managed to buy up much of the world’s available stockpiles of such gear as N95 masks” and “procured nearly 2.5 billion pieces of anti-epidemic equipment” as COVID-19 swept the globe. President Xi Jinping’s regime hoarded and then resold the equipment at exorbitant markups – as much as 3,000 percent.

Beijing’s calculating callousness shouldn’t shock us. The PRC has always been an ends-justify-the-means regime that has disdain for international norms of behavior. The COVID-19 crisis proves that the PRC’s supply-chain dominance is a weapon Xi can and will use against the free world.

Minerals CRS reports China is a “near-monopoly producer” of rare earth elements (REEs) and related critical minerals, including overall REEs (80 percent of global production), yttrium (99 percent), gallium (94 percent), magnesium metal (87 percent), tungsten (82 percent), bismuth (80 percent), arsenic (91 percent) and germanium (57 percent).

REEs are essential to the manufacture of cellphones, flat-panel televisions, hybrid engines, computers, light bulbs, lasers, industrial magnets, batteries, MRI equipment, fiber-optics and superconductors. Each F-35 contains 919 pounds of REEs. In addition, REEs are used in the M1A2 tank’s navigation system, the Tomahawk missile’s guidance system, missile-defense technologies, satellites, night-vision equipment and communications gear.

As with medical supplies, China has shown a willingness to weaponize REEs. After a 2010 dispute with Japan, China reduced global exports by 72 percent and completely stopped supplying REEs to Japan. In 2020, Beijing cut REE exports 62 percent.

This underscores why President Trump issued an executive order in 2017 directing federal agencies to develop a strategy to secure “mineral commodities ... vital to the nation’s security.”

Military equipment and technology An interagency task force warned in 2018 that China represents “a significant and growing risk to the supply of materials and technologies deemed strategic and critical to U.S. national security.”

Reuters reported in 2014 that the Pentagon “repeatedly waived laws banning Chinese-built components on U.S. weapons in order to keep the ... F-35 fighter program on track in 2012 and 2013.” Equally worrisome, a PRC firm acquired the British company tasked with producing circuit boards for the F-35, which will soon become the backbone of U.S. and allied airpower.

According to the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, China accounts for 73 percent of Microsoft’s inbound supplies, more than 60 percent of Dell’s and HP’s, and nearly 50 percent of IBM’s. These are among the federal government’s top information technology suppliers.

As evidence of the military’s reliance on Chinese firms for off-the-shelf technology, the Air Force and Army purchased thousands of items produced by Lenovo and Lexmark in 2018. Yet in 2019, the Pentagon inspector general reported that Lenovo grafts “hidden hardware or software used for cyberespionage” into its computers, and Lexmark has “connections to Chinese military, nuclear and cyberespionage programs.”

Solutions If there is a silver lining here, it’s that the COVID-19 crisis has spurred the free world into reducing dependence on China.

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> The answer to our 'Made in China' problems is not only 'Made in America,' but made also in Australia, Japan, Korea, India, Europe, Latin America and Southeast Asia.

Perhaps the most dramatic evidence of this is Britain's 5G reversal. After approving PRC-based Huawei for his country's 5G buildout in January, Prime Minister Boris Johnson reversed course in July. COVID-19 changed neither the products offered by Huawei nor the nature of the PRC. Rather, what COVID-19 did – or more accurately, what Beijing's response to COVID-19 did – was remind Britain of the true nature of Xi's regime.

The United States, Britain and dozens of other countries are now building a "clean 5G network." Johnson is calling on the D10 – an informal partnership of 10 democracies enfolding the Group of Seven industrialized democracies plus Australia, South Korea and India – to pool their technological resources, build on their shared values and harness their interoperability to create an uncompromised 5G network.

This effort points to a practical solution to the supply-chain challenge exposed by COVID-19. Rather than retreating into protectionism or autarky, the United States and its allies could work together to build supply-chain resilience, diversify supply chains, and ensure availability of critical materials, products and technologies.

In other words, the answer to our "Made in China" problems is not only "Made in America," but made also in Australia, Japan, Korea, India, Europe, Latin America and Southeast Asia.

Toward that end, the United States is launching an Economic Prosperity Network (EPN) comprised of trusted partners committed to "integrity, accountability, transparency, reciprocity, respect for rule of law, respect for property of all kinds, respect for sovereignty of nations and respect for basic human rights," as the State Department reported in mid-2020. The EPN and related efforts aim to "restructure these supply chains to prevent something like this from ever happening again," according to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. The United States, Australia, Colombia, India, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea and Vietnam are exploring how to build this uncompromised supply chain.

Relatedly, Japanese and Australian officials have proposed expanding the membership and mission of the Five Eyes intelligence alliance (enfolding the United States, Britain, Australia, Canada and New Zealand) by adding Japan and cooperating on production of strategically critical materials, such as REEs and medical supplies.

Already, an Australian REE mining firm is shipping minerals to Colorado for processing by a U.S. firm. In a similar way, an international partnership built around the Five Eyes, D10 or EPN could collaborate to produce, stock and pre-position medical equipment and medicines outside the PRC. The purpose would not be to weaponize medicine, as China has done, but quite the opposite: to ensure that supplies are available when needed and to allow the market to function unhindered by malign actors.

Here at home, scores of bills are percolating in Congress related to supply chains and China.

Some would incentivize U.S. drug companies to produce more pharmaceutical ingredients in the United States. Others would use grants or tax credits to revive America's REE supply chain, which withered in the 1990s. Still others aim to bolster America's industrial base and refashion its technology supply chains.

Sens. John Cornyn, R-Texas, and Mark Warner, D-Va., for instance, have introduced legislation that would create a $750 million fund to support an international microelectronics consortium committed to "development of secure microelectronics and secure microelectronics supply chains." Their bill would also earmark billions of dollars to support fabrication of semiconductors, promote research and prototyping of advance semiconductors, and restore their manufacturing to U.S. soil.

There's growing support for "reshoring" – the process by which U.S. firms would shift operations from China back to America. Already, the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation and the Pentagon are distributing $100 million to reshore "domestic industrial-

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based capabilities to support the national COVID-19 response." Some policymakers want to expand on this by creating a $25 billion "reshoring fund."

Japan is even further down the reshoring road. After weathering the human and economic costs of overreliance on China in COVID-19's wake, Tokyo committed $2.2 billion to help Japanese companies move production out of China, and 87 have already begun moving.

Larry Kudlow, director of the National Economic Council, suggests that Washington follow Tokyo's model and "pay the moving costs of American companies" to relocate factories outside China.

Costs However, that won't address other costs. The main reason companies move offshore is the cost of labor, which is lower in China than in America. Subsidizing firms to pull out of China won't alter this economic reality.

Then there's equipment. "China may not allow a company to take any of the machinery, tools and molds in its manufacturing plants to another country," points out Ed Yardeni, a global-investment strategist.

These factors serve as a reminder that breaking China's supply-chain dominance won't be easy, painless or cheap. Quite unlike postwar Japan and postwar Germany, the PRC has no desire to join an international system premised on the rule of law, free markets and fair play – only to supplant it. And quite unlike the Soviet Union, which literally walled itself off from the world, China has stretched its tendrils deep into the Americas, Europe and Indo-Pacific. As Pompeo noted during a speech in Europe, "The CCP (Chinese Communist Party) is already enmeshed in our economies, in our politics, in our societies in ways the Soviet Union never was."

Indeed, Oxford Economics reports that U.S.-China trade supports 2.6 million American jobs. China's market accounts for 66 percent of Qualcomm's revenue, 17 percent of Apple's and 14 percent of Boeing's. A 2017 study found that trade with China saves the typical American household $850 a year.

Even so, there appears to be a new bipartisan interest in removing roadblocks to reshoring. Trump has signed executive orders aimed at "relocating medical supply chains back home" and "accelerating the domestic manufacturing of essential medicines." Likewise, during his presidential campaign, former Vice President Joe Biden vowed to "use the full power of the federal government to rebuild U.S. domestic manufacturing capacity of our supply chains for critical products."

The market may be a step ahead of the policymakers. As Beijing hoarded medical supplies, Apple and Honeywell, Fanatics and Ford, GM and GE, MyPillow and 3M, ExxonMobil and Anheuser-Busch retooled production lines to churn out facemasks, N95 respirators, rubbing alcohol, hand sanitizers, disinfectants, face shields, ventilators and hospital gowns.

Producing 13 million facemasks a day, Taiwan also stepped up to fill the gap created by Beijing's attempt to parlay a health crisis into a geopolitical windfall.

By February, firms of every kind were moving supply chains away from China to develop resilience. A Bank of America survey found in March that companies operating in 83 percent of international industries – including carmakers, semiconductor manufacturers and medical suppliers – planned to move all or part of their supply chains out of China.

"These movements are tectonic," according to Bank of America economist Ethan Harris.

Limits Even free-traders like Kudlow recognize that certain industries and products cannot be entrusted to malign actors. In fact, the father of free trade, Adam Smith, argued in "The Wealth of Nations" (1776) that "when some particular sort of industry is necessary for the defense of the country," it's appropriate "to lay some burden upon foreign for the encouragement of domestic industry."

The father of our country would agree. "A free people ought not only to be armed, but disciplined," President George Washington counseled. "Their safety and interest require that they should promote such manufactories as tend to render them independent on others for essential, particularly for military, supplies."

In the 21st century, as COVID-19 has taught us, supplies that are essential for defense of the country include not only munitions, but also minerals, microchips, masks and medicines. After decades of close collaboration, our Five Eyes, Group of Seven and D10 allies have proven their ability to build up those supplies – and rebuild our supply chains.

Alan W. Dowd is a senior fellow with the Sagamore Institute Center for America's Purpose.

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100 MILES FOR HOPE

Successful campaign benefits foundation, energizes Legionnaires.

Thousands of American Legion Family members accepted the 100 Miles for Hope challenge issued by National Commander James W. "Bill" Oxford on Aug. 3, raising more than $140,000 for the Veterans & Children Foundation.

The goal for participants was to cover 100 miles in 100 days, concluding on Veterans Day.

Some walked or ran. Others rode their bicycles or motorcycles. Still others covered the distance in their own ways: elliptical stepping, swimming, canoeing, kayaking, traversing golf courses, even riding a mule.

"This is a great campaign to not only energize our members to stay active during the pandemic but to raise needed funds for the Legion's Veterans & Children Foundation," said Oxford, who walked 100 miles and also rode his bike 100 miles. "It comes as no surprise that our participants showed an incredible amount of dedication and passion for helping others."

Plans are underway for a second campaign, with new challenges, in 2021.

legion.org/100miles

Photo by Michael Hjelmstad

4,712

Minimum number of participants

84,000

Approximate number of arm revolutions needed by disabled Navy veteran Charlie Parker, a member of American Legion Post 852 in Murrieta, Calif., to swim 100 miles

"I like helping people. If I can raise some money by swimming that will help veterans and children, it makes me feel good."

"I had allowed my weight to spike at 270, and my blood pressure meds were stuck between VA and the Postal Service. The challenge allowed me to work on my personal health. I'm not stopping until Veterans Day. And maybe not even then."

Kevin Motter, an Army veteran and adjutant of American Legion Post 109 in Montpelier, Ohio. He covered 1,148 miles on his stationary bike and lost more than 27 pounds.

$140,000

Minimum amount raised for the Veterans & Children Foundation

400+

Stories shared by participants on Legiontown

▲ 223

Miles completed in four days of cycling by John Piechowski and Donald Weigend

"It was neat to participate as an American Legion Family. The #100MilesForHope challenge was personally rewarding, and I have the fortune of professionally benefiting as well."

American Legion Department of South Dakota Service Officer Courtney VanZanten, an Air Force veteran who participated with her children. She is adjutant of Post 136 in Chester, S.D.

OUR WWII STORY

‘Those are Japanese planes!’

Retired Army Command Sgt. Maj. Sterling Cale has participated in commemoration events for years, including the USS Arizona *Memorial 50th anniversary ceremony in Honolulu on May 27, 2012.* U.S. Air Force photo

A Pearl Harbor survivor remembers the infamy.

BY JOHN RAUGHTER

A rising sun was the first sign to Sterling R. Cale that something was off. But rather than the sun, it was Mars, the god of war, that became his uninvited and all-too-frequent companion in a military career that spanned from World War II through the Vietnam War.

On the morning of Dec. 7, 1941, Cale was a 20-year-old Navy hospital pharmacist’s mate stationed at Pearl Harbor. He’d just eaten breakfast and was walking to the receiving station when he noticed something happening on Battleship Row.

“‘How come they’re bombing the battle wagons?’” he thought at the time. “‘We don’t train on Sunday! Must be some sort of National Guard or reserve activity’ .... But then, as I was watching, a plane came by with the Rising Sun on the fuselage, and I said, ‘My God, those are Japanese planes!’”

In that moment Cale’s life, and the world, changed. Though he wasn’t a strong swimmer, Cale walked into shallow harbor waters to retrieve wounded and dead bodies over the next two hours.

“I only picked up 46 people,” he told The American Legion in 2019. “Some of those people were dead already. Some were badly burned, and I would try to pick them up and the skin would come right off their hands. Some of them were just tired because they were blown off the ship or jumped and had to get ashore.”

A life member of John R. Rowe American Legion Post 17 in Honolulu, Cale, 98, has told the story of his Pearl Harbor experience hundreds of times – often with tourists to the Pearl Harbor National Memorial, and the handful of living survivors who visit. “In the last 10 years we talked to 25,000 students from fourth grade up to college. We told them all about it. Japan didn’t like to let anybody in their country know how they attacked our country and our ships.”

Like most people in his generation, Pearl Harbor

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was Cale's first exposure to combat. A farm boy from Macomb, Ill., Cale enlisted in the Navy with the intention of serving in the dirigible airship program at Lakehurst, N.J. But the 1937 *Hindenburg* disaster led to the program's cancellation and a change in Cale's plans. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, he was attached to the 1st Marine Division, where he would serve as a corpsman at Guadalcanal.

A small boat rescues a sailor from the battleship USS West Virginia *(BB 48), burning in the foreground following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor Dec. 7, 1941. USS* Tennessee *(BB 43) is visible behind* West Virginia. U.S. Navy photo

"I actually treated the wounds of Japanese prisoners, the same as our Marines," Cale said.

Having had the full experience of Navy and Marine Corps life, he transferred to the Army in 1948. Two years later, his captain at the 5th Regimental Combat Team asked, "Are you ready, Cale? You're going to Korea."

There, he was entrenched in the north, where the fighting was fierce. "We kept mowing down people coming across the Chinese river. I said, 'What's wrong with people?' They didn't know when to stop. The Japanese didn't know when to stop .... Only thing different with the Chinese is when they came across the river, only one guy would have a weapon. The rest would have farm implements – scythe, sickle, machete, hoe – waiting for the first guy to get killed so they could get a weapon."

The enemy's tenacity wasn't the only threat. Explosive booby traps set by North Koreans and subzero temperatures added to what Cale described as a hell on earth. "I slept at night with a grenade in each hand because the North Koreans were coming down and slitting throats. If anybody like that came near me, I'd just have to open one hand and we'd both be gone."

In 1955, Cale was sent to Vietnam as part of a 19-member U.S. team assigned to observe the French presence there. In total, he spent nine years in Vietnam as a soldier and later a State Department official. His duties ranged from military intelligence to medical support.

Lt. Col. John Gilbertson, an infantry adviser with the Cay Mai intelligence school, spoke highly of Cale's service in South Vietnam in a letter of commendation.

"By teaching English to officers, soldiers and their families, by his knowledge of the people, their language, customs and taboos, MSgt. Cale was able to realize the real, intimate trust that is so often illusive in an advisory function," Gilbertson wrote. "His model behavior and appearance, his friendly but businesslike manner with all Vietnamese peoples, has produced outstanding results from an academic standpoint, but more importantly it has meant untiring efforts to cement the bond of friendship between the Vietnamese people and the U.S. advisers representing the government of the United States, and is in keeping with the current policy of U.S. military participation in Civic Action Programs which benefit the people of an underdeveloped country."

Cale retired from the Army as a command sergeant major, and continued to work for the U.S. government until his final assignment at the officers' club at Hawaii's Schofield Barracks. At 83, his 57-year government career came to a close.

In the afterword of the book "Sterling Cale: A True American," Cale's son, Sterling V. Cale, writes, "May we take the life of one man and his family to heart, and emulate it to continue our country's great legacy and remember the sacrifices that were made for our freedom."

Today, Cale is believed to be the last living military Pearl Harbor survivor still residing in Hawaii. His home is just a few miles from where the attack occurred.

"It's always on my mind," he said. "I know what happened, how it happened, (but) I can never understand why it happened."

John Raughter is deputy director of media relations for The American Legion.

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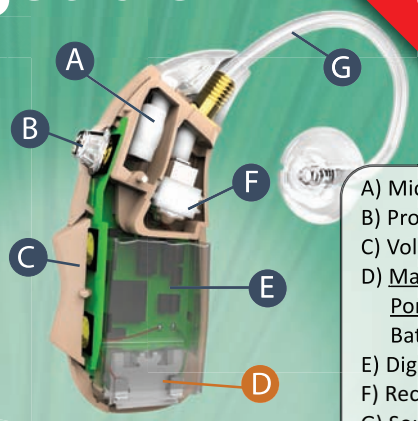

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BROTHERS IN ARMS

Author tells stories of siblings buried side by side in World War II cemeteries.

BY KEVIN M. CALLAHAN

Ten years ago, I visited the Sicily-Rome American Cemetery near Anzio with my wife and young sons. Among the gravestones, we came across two brothers from Iowa buried side by side, Fred and Edgar Wood. As the father of three boys, I found the image of the brothers resting forever together to be especially poignant, and it inspired me to find and tell the stories of all brothers buried side by side in American World War II cemeteries.

More than 90,000 U.S. servicemembers are buried in the 14 American World War II cemeteries around the world. In 243 cases, two brothers are buried side by side. In one case, three brothers rest together.

In 2018, I set out to find the surviving family members of these brothers, to see photos and other artifacts, and to hear firsthand the memories of those left behind.

My journey began at a small house in Buena Vista, Va., where my oldest son and I spoke with Talmadge Claytor, 95, who had served and fought with his two brothers, Eugene and Elwood. At one point during the Battle of the Bulge, the Claytor brothers had the Germans surrounded, he said: one to the north, one to the west, and one to the south. Only Talmadge returned home to tell their tale.

I traveled to 35 states, meeting with 64 families in big cities and small towns all over

Photos courtesy Kevin M. Callahan

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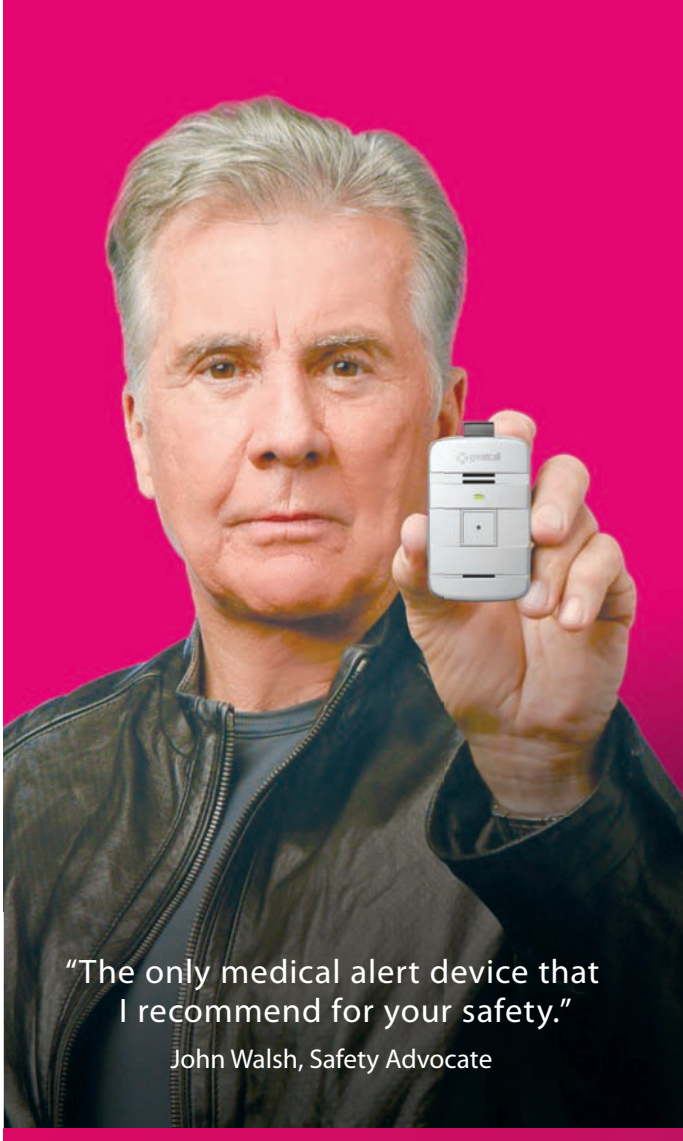

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[1]Preece, Jeph. "Greatcall - The Best Overall Medical Alert System." *Dignifyed,* 12 Apr. 2018, www.dignifyed.com/greatcall-review-24.html. [2]Consistently rated the most reliable network and best overall network performance in the country by IHS Markit's RootScore Reports. [3]One of the most affordable mobile medical alert systems determined by totaling device cost, online activation fee, and 12 months of service among competitors offering mobile devices available for purchase. [4]Fall Detection is an optional feature and may not always accurately detect a fall. Users should always push their button when they need help, if possible. Fall detection only available with purchase of Ultimate Health and Safety Plan. [5]Monthly service fee excludes government taxes or assessment surcharges and may change. [6]50% off of $49.99 MSRP is only valid for new lines of service. Offer valid 11/1/20 through 11/28/20. Urgent Response Service tracks an approximate location of the device. Urgent Response or 9-1-1 calls can only be made when cellular service is available. Waterproof rated for up to 3 feet for up to 30 minutes. GREATCALL and LIVELY are trademarks of Best Buy and its affiliated companies. © 2020 Best Buy. All rights reserved.

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the country. In Atlanta, Janice Kane told me how her husband, Richard, was recuperating in an Army hospital in France in the spring of 1945 after losing two brothers in the war, John and Norman. When George Patton came by to hand out Purple Hearts, Richard returned his to the famous general, saying he didn't deserve it. "Why?" Patton asked. "Because I didn't shed any blood," he answered. "My brothers did."

Eileen Cimarron welcomed me into her adobe home in San Felipe Pueblo, N.M., the same one occupied by her grandmother a generation before. Guadalupe "Lupé" Duran lost two sons in the war, Jose and Macedonio. A third son, Isidor, returned but was never the same.

At a dining room table in Omaha, Neb., Donna (Lantow) Fettig recalled being 11 in the autumn of 1944 and riding her bike in the town of Claremore, Okla. Rounding a corner, she saw two women from church walking up her driveway carrying covered dishes. She knew exactly what it meant: someone had died. It was her brother, Norman Lantow, just six months after she'd lost another brother, Robert.

In Salem, Ohio, I asked Margaret Paxson about her two half-brothers killed in the war. She looked at me soberly and said, "When you are all raised by the same single mother, there is no such thing as 'half' anything." She was referring to her mother, Anna Trimmer White, who not only lost Earl and Stanton Trimmer in World War II, but a third son, Carl White Jr., in the Korean War.

In Medford, Mass., Hazel "Summer" Akimoto told me how her husband, Ted, vividly recalled the day in April 1942 when a white bus drove up his street in Los Angeles, accompanied by an Army jeep with a machine gun on the hood. The bus was there to take his family away. Like many second-generation Japanese-Americans, Ted later joined the U.S. Army to escape life in an internment camp, joining his older brothers, Victor and Johnny. Only Ted survived the war.

Finally, I arrived at a towering office building in New York City, where Ted Roosevelt IV told me that when a nosy reporter went to Sagamore Hill in the summer of 1918, he found the former president hugging the horse of his fallen son, Quentin, crying out his name: "Quinny, Quinny, Quinny ...." After World War II, Quentin's remains were transferred to Normandy American Cemetery to be buried next to his big brother, Ted Roosevelt Jr.

Kevin M. Callahan is author of "Brothers in Arms: Remembering Brothers Buried Side by Side in American World War II Cemeteries" (2020).

Julius H.O. "Henry" Pieper (left), Ludwig J.W. "Louie" Pieper (right)

THE PIEPER TWINS, Creston, Neb.

The Pieper brothers, Henry and Louie, were said to be inseparable. Once, they dated another pair of twins so they could go on double dates together. The two proved to be inseparable not only in life, but also in death.

In February 1943, the 17-year-old Pieper twins went into a Navy recruiting station in Omaha and said they wanted to serve on the same ship. Because of the loss of the five Sullivan brothers months earlier, the recruiter told them that was impossible. But a letter from the twins' father convinced the Navy otherwise.

On June 19, 1944, the Piepers were serving on LST 523, ferrying troops and supplies to the Normandy beachhead, when a German mine tore their ship in half. Two hundred soldiers and sailors were killed, including the Pieper twins. Louie's body washed ashore several days later; he was buried at Normandy American Cemetery. Henry's remains were not located, so his name was listed on the Walls of the Missing. The Pieper twins, it seemed, had finally been separated.

Seven decades later, they were reunited. Vanessa Taylor, a high-school student in Ainsworth, Neb., was researching the Piepers for a National History Day project. Her inquiries led the U.S. government to realize it had Henry's remains, which had been discovered by French salvage divers in the early 1960s and interred at Ardennes American Cemetery without identification.

On June 19, 2018, exactly 74 years after their ship sank, the twins were buried side by side at Normandy. Shortly before their deaths, the twins had sent a letter home. "Don't worry about us," they wrote. "We are together."

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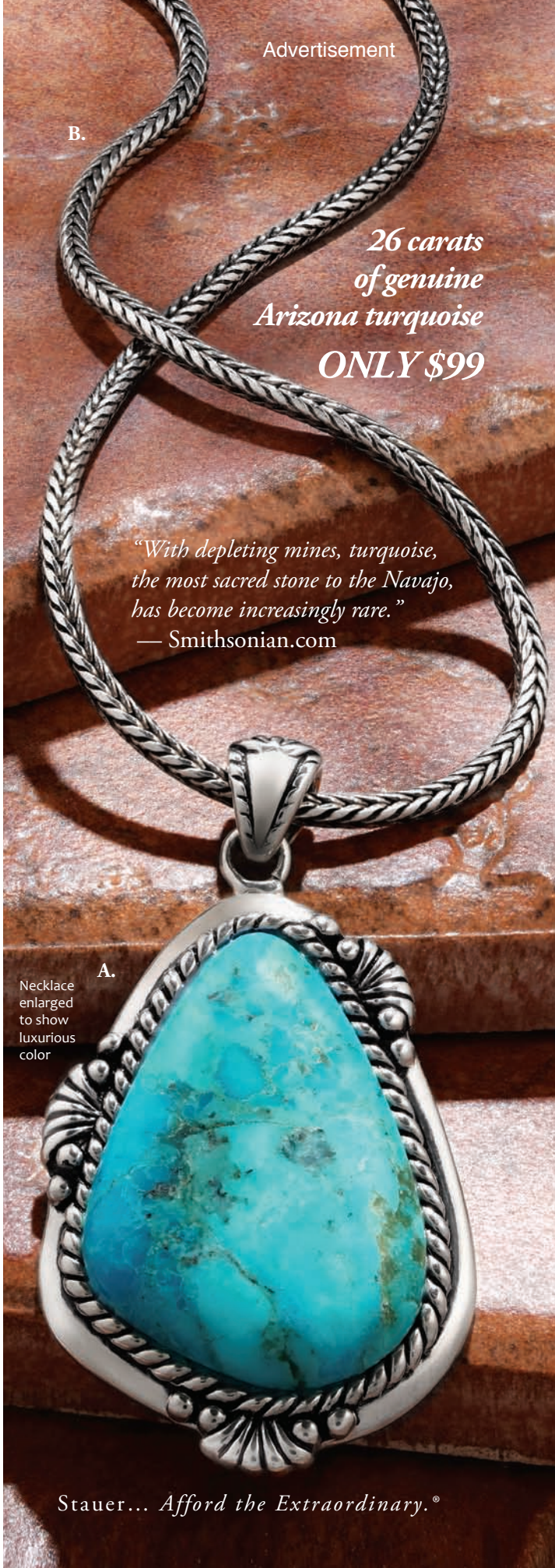

THE TESTER BROTHERS, New Victory, Tenn.

What the Tester family enjoyed more than anything else was making music. On the front porch of their two-story clapboard home – what came to be known as "the Old Home Place" – Millard and Eliza Tester, along with their seven boys and two girls, would assemble a variety of fiddles, banjos, and other instruments and play the music they learned growing up in the hills and valleys of northeast Tennessee.

In December 1943, a note arrived at the Old Home Place, informing the Testers that a telegram awaited them at the post office in nearby Telford. It fell to Carroll Tester, the youngest and only child still living at home, to walk the 2½ miles to town, retrieve the telegram and bring the news back to his mother, who had lost her husband to cancer the year before. Three times Carroll made the journey, each time bringing back the sad news that one of his older brothers had been killed in the war.

The last telegram arrived in January 1945, and it was that day that the music died. Carroll's sons, Mike and Pat, remember a closet in the Old Home Place where the musical instruments were stored: a banjo, a guitar, a fiddle. They were never strummed or played again, the memories too painful of a time and a group of great brothers gone by.

THE PREDDY BROTHERS, Greensboro, N.C.

"Are you sure that skinny little kid can fly?" asked Col. John C. Meyer when he saw the new pilot who had just arrived to join his 352nd Fighter Group in England. That skinny little kid was George E. Preddy Jr. from Greensboro, N.C., and he certainly could fly. George went on to become the top P-51 fighter ace of World War II.

The P-51 Mustang – an American plane with a British Rolls-Royce engine – was an engineering marvel, a single-engine fighter that could fly as far, as fast and as high as a bomber while still maintaining fighting prowess. Armed with the new fighter, Jimmy Doolittle, head of the 8th Air Force, was no longer content with simple escort duty. He wanted to hunt and destroy the Luftwaffe. In George Preddy Jr., Doolittle found the hunter he was looking for. Described as a "hunter warrior" by his comrades, George went on to achieve 26 air-to-air kills, once taking out six enemy aircraft in five minutes.

George's younger brother, Bill, also became a decorated P-51 pilot, and both were killed by ground fire: George by friendly fire during the Battle of the Bulge, and Bill while strafing an enemy airfield in Czechoslovakia in April 1945.

At one point during the war, George was injured in a training accident, and sent a letter to a friend explaining why he needed to return to action. "I must go back, back to do my part, back to fly and give again," wrote George. "And I'm not afraid. My plane may be shot away, but I have wings. Wings not of wood or steel or stuff but wings God gave my soul. Thank God for wings."

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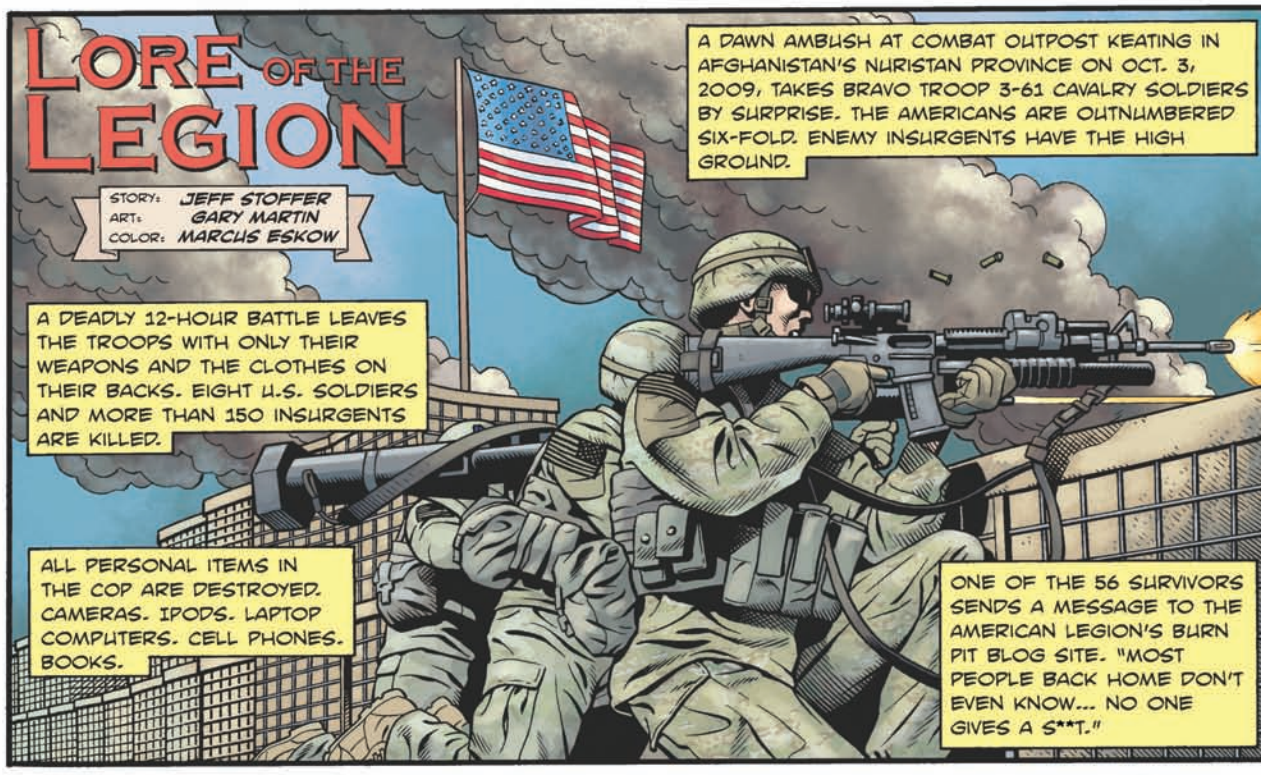

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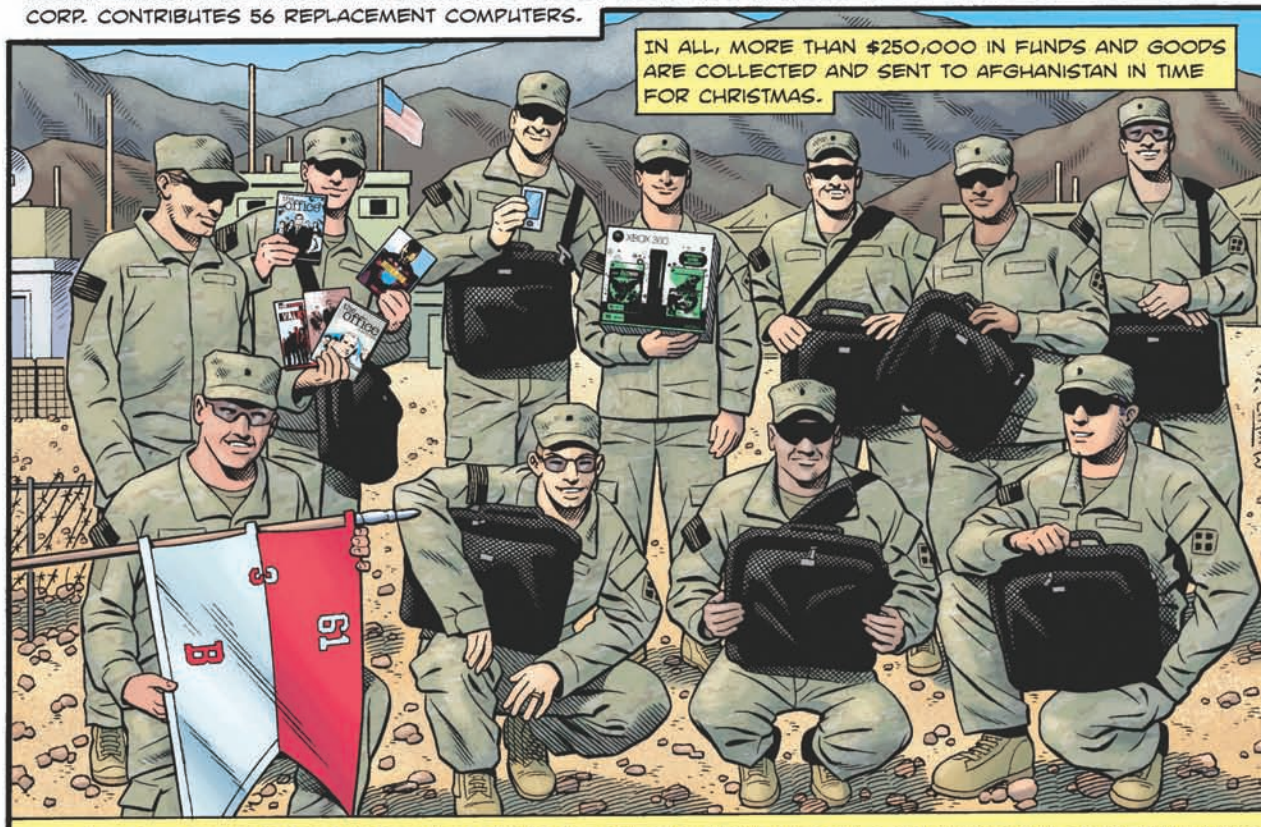

"CHRISTMAS WAS A GREAT TIME FOR THE SOLDIERS OF BLACK KNIGHT TROOP," A COMPANY FIRST SERGEANT WRITES IN AN E-MAIL TO THE AMERICAN LEGION. "(WE) PLACED ALL THE ITEMS IN A GATHERING AREA ... THIS WAS AN OVERWHELMING AMOUNT OF SUPPORT. I WAS, NEEDLESS TO SAY, NEARLY IN TEARS ... KNOWING THE TIME, EFFORT, AND CARE THAT WAS TAKEN TO PUT ALL THIS TOGETHER."

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The American Legion
VETERANS STRENGTHENING AMERICA

The American Legion's National Executive Committee passed resolutions in August by email and October in a virtual meeting adopting statements of vision, mission and values that express the who, what and why of the nation's largest organization of wartime veterans.

VISION

"The American Legion: Veterans Strengthening America"

MISSION

"To enhance the well-being of America's veterans, their families, our military, and our communities by our devotion to mutual helpfulness."

VALUES

A VETERAN IS A VETERAN

The American Legion embraces all current and former members of the military and endeavors to help them transition into their communities.

SELFLESS SERVICE

The American Legion celebrates all who contribute to something larger than themselves and inspires others to serve and strengthen America.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The American Legion meets the unique needs of local communities.

AMERICAN VALUES AND PATRIOTISM

The American Legion advocates for upholding and defending the United States Constitution, equal justice and opportunity for everyone and discrimination against no one, youth education, responsible citizenship, and honoring military service by observing and participating in patriotic and memorial events.

ADVANCING THE VISION

The American Legion educates, mentors and leads new generations of Americans.

HONORING THOSE WHO CAME BEFORE US

The American Legion pays perpetual respect for all past military sacrifices to ensure they are never forgotten by new generations.

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National Commander James W. "Bill" Oxford attends the NEC's virtual Fall Meetings from National Headquarters in Indianapolis. Photo by Ben Mikesell

FALL MEETINGS

'We are needed ... you are needed'

The American Legion National Executive Committee convened in October – but differently than ever before, with only National Commander James W. "Bill" Oxford, national officers and a few American Legion staff members present at National Headquarters in Indianapolis. Committee members participated remotely via Zoom.

The meetings were the first time the NEC had convened since the fall of 2019. The committee's Spring Meetings and the 2020 national convention were canceled due to the pandemic, and what business had to be done was conducted via email. Commission and committee meetings prior to the NEC's Fall Meetings were also conducted virtually.

Oxford's opening remarks referenced many American Legion events canceled in 2020, which led to fewer opportunities for the Legion Family to meet. Still, Oxford said, "The American Legion has never been about self. So we continue to serve. We are needed. You are needed .... The American Legion needs you and your communities need you."

He connected the Buddy Check initiative to specific veterans in need of support, including those who need help getting out to vote in November and those at increased risk of suicide due to the pandemic.

"The suicide rate was a crisis among veterans before COVID-19," Oxford said. "The shutdowns, economic consequences and isolation have added to this crisis .... I think our Buddy Checks could make a difference."

Oxford also spoke of Senate legislation drafted by Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, that would require VA to establish a "Buddy Check Week" modeled on The American Legion's initiative.

Regarding membership, one of Oxford's ongoing goals as national commander is a 90 percent renewal rate. At the time of the Fall Meetings, the renewal rate for 2020 was about 87 percent. "We need to do more than simply welcome new members to our organization," he said. "We need to call them regularly with Buddy Checks." (The other two goals, carried over into Oxford's 2020-2021 leadership year, are 100,000 new members and 100 percent Consolidated Post Reporting.)

GRANTS AVAILABLE TO POSTS AFFECTED BY COVID-19

Established by Resolution No. 36, the Mission Blue Post Assistance Program will provide $1,000 grants through the National Emergency Fund (NEF) to posts affected by stay-at-home orders and government-mandated business closures. These funds must be used exclusively to pay current or past-due rent, mortgage, utilities and insurance.

Eligibility requirements are the same as NEF grants, including financial need, a Consolidated Post Report on file, an IRS 990 filed by the prescribed due date, active participation in one or more American Legion programs in the past 18 months, and documentation indicating that the post is properly incorporated.

The Mission Blue Post Assistance Program grant application will be a fillable PDF. Watch **legion.org** for its release. Posts have until Dec. 31, 2021, to apply for grants.

SELECTED RESOLUTIONS

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

16 National Global War on Terrorism Memorial
17 Support for review of minority awards of Medal of Honor in World War I and subsequent wars

NATIONAL SECURITY

22 Restore constitutional balance to foreign-policy decision-making by repealing and replacing outdated authorizations for use of military force
23 Diversify U.S. supply chain to prevent shortages of pharmaceutical raw materials, medicines and vaccines

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION

5 Engraving of military insignia for combat-related decorations on government-furnished headstones
8 Support legislation to revise definition of "Vietnam Era" to begin on Nov. 1, 1955

The full text of all 37 resolutions passed during the NEC's Fall Meetings is online:

archive.legion.org

AWARDS

SPIRIT OF SERVICE

Amy-Christy Amakihe, Air Force
Jasmine L. Johnson, Navy
Justin T. Middlemiss, Marine Corps
Amanda Moore, Coast Guard
Matthew J. Turley, Army

NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER OF THE YEAR

Lt. Robert Berg Jr., Village of DeForest Police Department, DeForest, Wis.

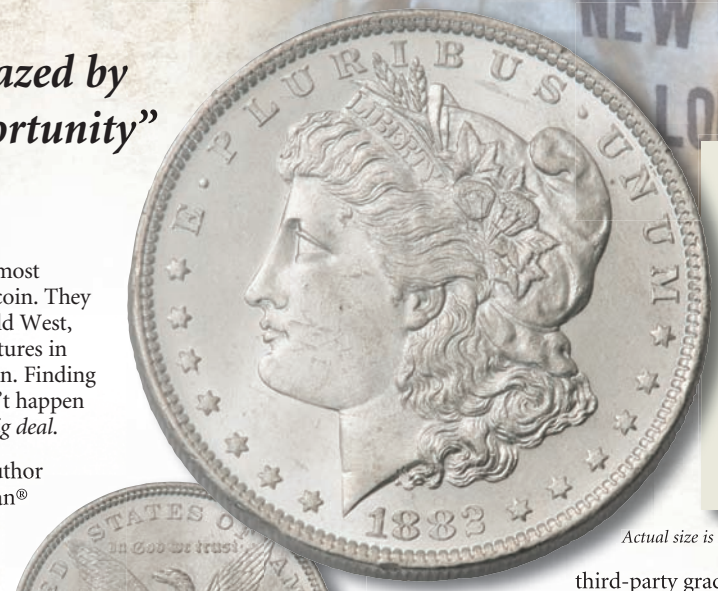
NATIONAL FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR

Ryan N. Berney, Offutt Air Force Base Fire & Emergency Services, Offutt AFB, Neb.

Discovered! Unopened Bag of 138-Year-Old Morgan Silver Dollars

Unopened for 138 Years!

Coin experts amazed by "Incredible Opportunity"



Actual size is 38.1 mm

- ✓ **Historic Morgan Silver Dollars**
- ✓ **Minted in New Orleans**
- ✓ **Struck and bagged in 1882**
- ✓ **Unopened for 138 years**
- ✓ **26.73 grams of 90% fine silver**
- ✓ **Hefty 38.1 mm diameter**
- ✓ **Certified Brilliant Uncirculated by NGC**
- ✓ **Certified "Great Southern Treasury Hoard" pedigree**
- ✓ **Limit five coins per household**

The Morgan Silver Dollar is the most popular and iconic vintage U.S. coin. They were the Silver Dollars of the Wild West, going on countless untold adventures in dusty saddlebags across the nation. Finding a secret hoard of Morgans doesn't happen often—and when it does, it's a *big deal.*

How big? Here's numismatist, author and consultant to the Smithsonian® Jeff Garrett:

"It's very rare to find large quantities of Morgan Silver Dollars, especially in bags that have been sealed... to find several thousand Morgan Silver Dollars that are from the U.S. Treasury Hoards, still unopened, is really an incredible opportunity."

-Jeff Garrett

But where did this unique hoard come from? Read on...

Morgans from the New Orleans Mint

In 1859, Nevada's Comstock Lode was discovered, and soon its rich silver ore made its way across the nation, including to the fabled New Orleans Mint, the only U.S. Mint branch to have served under the U.S. government, the State of Louisiana and the Confederacy. In 1882, some of that silver was struck into Morgan Silver Dollars, each featuring the iconic "O" mint mark of the New Orleans Mint. Employees then placed the freshly struck coins into canvas bags...

The U.S. Treasury Hoard

Fast-forward nearly 80 years. In the 1960s, the U.S. government opened its vaults and revealed a massive store of Morgan Silver Dollars—including *full, unopened bags* of "fresh" 1882-O Morgan Silver Dollars. A number of bags were secured by a child of the Great Depression—a southern gentleman whose upbringing showed him the value of hard assets like silver. He stashed the unopened bags of "fresh" Morgans away, and there they stayed...

The Great Southern Treasury Hoard

That is, until *another* 50 years later, when the man's family finally decided to sell the coins—still in their unopened bags—which we secured, bag and all! We submitted the coins to respected third-party grading service Numismatic Guaranty Corporation (NGC), and they agreed to honor the southern gentleman by giving the coins the pedigree of the "Great Southern Treasury Hoard."

These gorgeous 1882-O Morgans are as bright and new as the day they were struck and bagged 138 years ago. Coins are graded on a 70-point scale, with those graded at least Mint State-60 (MS60) often referred to as "Brilliant Uncirculated" or BU. Of all 1882-O Morgans struck, *LESS THAN 1% have earned a Mint State grade.* This makes these unopened bags of 1882-O Morgans extremely rare, certified as being in BU condition—nearly unheard of for coins 138 years old.

Don't Miss This Rare Opportunity—Order Now!

Regular 1882-O Morgans sell elsewhere for as much as $133, and that's without the original brilliant shine these "fresh" 138-year-old coins have, without their special NGC hoard designation, and without their ability to tell their full, complete story from the Comstock Lode all the way to your collection.

Given the limited quantity of coins available from this historic hoard, we must set a strict limit of five coins per household. Call quickly to secure yours today as supplies are sure to sell out quickly!

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Gov. Kate Brown signs legislation designating U.S. Highway 26 in Oregon as a POW/MIA Memorial Highway. The Bend Heroes Foundation and its partners raised nearly $20,000 to help fund the project. Photo by S. Flynn Phillips

Route of Honor

Oregon dedicates nation's longest POW/MIA Memorial Highway.

Oregon veterans dedicated the nation's first border-to-border POW/MIA Memorial Highway in a series of ceremonies across the state on Sept. 18, National POW/MIA Recognition Day. The designation of U.S. Highway 26 honors 920 Oregon prisoners of war – including 135 civilians – and 999 Oregon military veterans and one civilian listed as missing in action, said Dick Tobiason, chairman of the Bend Heroes Foundation, which spearheaded the highway dedication.

American Legion members, including Past National Commander Charles Schmidt, organized four of the six dedication ceremonies and raised money to help pay for 10 signs posted along U.S. Highway 26 between Seaside and Vale.

National Vice Commander Rob Liebenow of Hillsboro, Ore., checks out the new sign near Seaside. Photo by S. Flynn Phillips

"The American Legion remains steadfast in supporting our nation's goal of achieving the fullest possible accounting for all U.S. military personnel and designated civilian personnel missing and unaccounted for from current and present wars," Schmidt said at ceremonies in Vale and John Day.

"This means returning living POWs, repatriating remains of those killed in action or who died in captivity, or providing convincing evidence why neither of these is possible. The American Legion will not rest until that mission is fulfilled."

Tobiason was emcee at the ceremonies in Madras and Prineville, where the names of Oregon's nearly 2,000 POWs and MIAs were on display. Lou Neubecker, adjutant of American Legion Post 99 in Seaside, organized the dedication ceremony there. Roland Swearingen, commander of Jefferson County Veterans American Legion Post 125 in Madras, worked with the city and other veterans groups on that community's dedication. The Prineville ceremony was organized by American Legion Crook County Post 29 Commander Alan Alderman in conjunction with local government officials and other veterans groups. American Legion Department of Oregon Commander Steve Adams and other department officers attended ceremonies in Seaside, Boring, Madras and Prineville.

Tobiason, a member of Stevens-Chute American Legion Post 4 in Bend, helped lead efforts to persuade the Oregon Legislature to designate the POW/MIA memorial during its 2019 session.

Seven other states have dedicated POW/MIA highways – Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Montana, New York, Washington and Wisconsin – but none are border to border. Idaho plans to designate the 401 miles of Highway 26 within its borders as a POW/MIA Memorial Highway in the next legislative session.

Tobiason and the late Bob Maxwell put Oregon veterans on the map in 2018 with the dedication of the state's Medal of Honor Highway – the longest in the United States. Because of their efforts, the Oregon Legislature designated the 451-mile stretch of U.S. Highway 20 from Newport east to the Idaho border as a tribute to the state's Medal of Honor recipients. The aim is for other states to follow their lead until Highway 20 is America's Medal of Honor Highway from coast to coast.

The POW/MIA Memorial Highway is the eighth Oregon highway honoring former servicemembers as a result of the Bend Heroes Foundation's efforts.

– Ken Olsen

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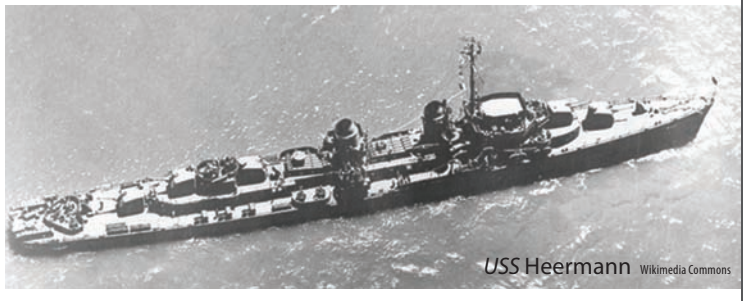


USS Heermann Wikimedia Commons

HISTORY

Last shot of World War II

We all know that America entered World War II on Dec. 7, 1941, and history buffs know USS *Ward* is credited with firing America's first shot in the war on that same day. But as *Stars and Stripes* reports, a debate still simmers over which Navy vessel fired the last shot of the war.

Timothy Francis, a historian at the Naval History and Heritage Command, tells *Stars and Stripes* that USS *Concord* "probably" fired the Navy's last shot against a shore target – Imperial Japanese bases on the northernmost of the Kuril Islands – on the evening of Aug. 12, 1945.

USS *Heermann* "may have possibly shot down the last Japanese airplane of the war on Aug. 16, 1945," the paper adds. About an hour after the *Heermann* received word of Japan's surrender, "gunners on the destroyer spotted a Yokosuka D4Y Suisei carrier bomber break through the cloud bank. The plane had no bombs or torpedoes attached to it, but it went into a shallow dive just off *Heermann*'s port beam, indicating it was possibly a kamikaze suicide run. The ship's 5-inch guns hit the plane, which went into a spin and crashed into the sea."

In addition, Chinese vessels commanded by a U.S. Navy officer "engaged a Japanese junk near Shanghai in the last Navy surface action of the war" on Aug. 21, according to Francis. And he reminds *Stars and Stripes* that "fighting continued in Manchuria, China and Southeast Asia for weeks after Aug. 15."

DEFENSE

New bases in the Pacific

The Republic of Palau, an archipelago nation about halfway between Guam and the southern Philippine islands, has given the Pentagon a green light to build ports, bases and airfields on its strategic territory, *The Wall Street Journal* reports. Palau made the offer during a visit by Defense Secretary Mark Esper, the first trip in history by a U.S. defense secretary. Palau wants "a broader, longer-term relationship" with the United States, according to the *Journal*.

AWARDS

Legion honors service academy graduates

Though The American Legion's national vice commanders were not able to make in-person presentations due to the pandemic, the organization did award its annual prizes to an exceptional student at each of the five U.S. service academies.

2nd Lt. James A. Albright, *Copper Canyon, Texas*

Albright received the American Legion award for outstanding achievement in chemistry at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, N.Y.

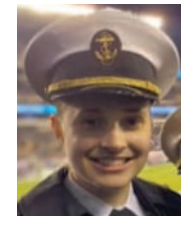
Photo via Madison County (Miss.) Schools Facebook page

2nd Lt. Zachary K. Bailey, *Madison, Miss.*

Bailey received the American Legion award for the highest proficiency in all academic subjects at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Ens. Alexander John Biscardi, *Flushing, N.Y.*

Biscardi received the American Legion award for national security at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, N.Y.



Ens. Michaela Frances Caldwell, *Valley Forge, Pa.*

Caldwell received the American Legion award for the highest marks in English, history and government at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md.

Ens. Joseph Rodriguez, *Atlanta*

Rodriguez received the American Legion award for athletics at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Conn.

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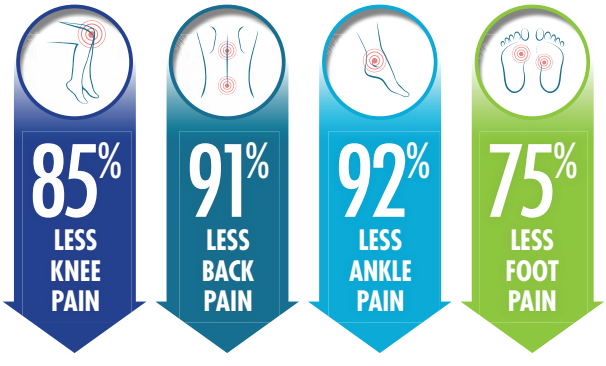

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HEALTH CARE

Hawaii state veterans home hit hard by COVID-19

Yukio Okutsu State Veterans Home Facebook

A COVID-19 outbreak that struck a state veterans home in Hilo, Hawaii, in late August infected a majority of the residents and led to the deaths of at least 27 veterans and spouses.

It's a stark reminder that the pandemic continues to devastate long-term care centers.

Although the Yukio Okutsu State Veterans Home restricted visitors almost from the beginning, it was slow to adopt testing and infection-control measures that may have helped keep the coronavirus at bay, says David Carlson, National Executive Committee member for the American Legion Department of Hawaii.

"It's a sad situation," Carlson says. "If they had followed the procedures right off the bat – and gotten testing right away – they might have been able to contain it." But he also faults the state for not acting until COVID-19 took hold. "The state, VA and the company never did anything until it was too late," Carlson says.

State and federal inspectors also raised questions about the veterans home's pandemic response prior to the outbreak. "There was very little evidence of proactive preparation/planning for COVID," a VA assessment team reported on Sept. 12. "Many practices observed seemed as if they were the result of recent changes. Even though these are improvements, these are things that should have been in place from the pandemic onset and a major contributing factor toward the rapid spread."

VA also provided a 19-person team to help deal with COVID-19 from Sept. 17 to Oct. 12, including nurses and specialists in infection control, industrial hygiene, housekeeping, logistics and emergency management.

The Avalon Health Care Group has run the veterans home under contract with the state of Hawaii since 2007. Avalon has been fined nearly $30,000 for issues at the Yukio Okutsu home since 2017, according to inspection records from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

The company says it took early "robust action" to protect the residents of Yukio Okutsu State Veterans Home, including restricting visitors. "The facility has implemented all the guidelines of the CDC and CMS since the start of the pandemic in March and have modified its processes as those guidelines have changed," says Peter Cooke, a retired major general in the Army Reserve who serves on Avalon's board. "Unfortunately, extensive independent research shows that once the virus begins circulating at a high rate in a community, as it did in Hawaii this summer, it is all but certain to infect long-term care facilities."

Other state veterans homes, particularly on the East Coast, have also struggled to protect their residents from infection. Overall, about 40 percent of U.S. COVID-19 deaths have occurred in nursing homes. Veterans homes appear to have been especially hard-hit, but a lack of comprehensive data about COVID-19 infections in federal, state and private nursing homes makes it difficult to compare how each is performing.

– Ken Olsen

HONOR & REMEMBRANCE

'First Colors' event to raise flag over new WWI memorial

FIRST COLORS CEREMONY
NATIONAL WORLD WAR I MEMORIAL
WASHINGTON, D.C.

On Dec. 11, the U.S. flag will be raised over the new National World War I Memorial in Washington, D.C., for the first time during a live broadcast event.

The "First Colors" ceremony will trace the path of an American flag that first flew over the nation's capital April 6, 2017, commemorating the centennial of the day the United States went to war in 1917. The flag then flew over the American World War I battlefield cemeteries of Europe, honoring the 116,516 Americans who gave their all during the war. Its final destination is Washington, where the flag will fly in perpetuity above the National World War I Memorial.

Featuring Oscar nominee Gary Sinise, "First Colors" will include elected officials, military leaders and performances from the U.S. Army's Band "Pershing's Own," the 369th Regiment Harlem Hellfighters Tribute Band and the original cast of the musical "Hello Girls."

Illustration courtesy U.S. World War I Centennial Commission

The commemorative flag's path recalls the epic journey to Europe by the legendary doughboys, honors those who made the ultimate sacrifice on the fields of battle, and rejoices at their triumphant return home.

Go to the U.S. World War I Centennial Commission's website or Facebook page for a link to the live broadcast:

ww1cc.org

facebook.com/ww1centennial

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CORPORATE ALLIANCES

Legion, UnitedHealthcare create alliance to support veterans

The American Legion has formed an alliance with UnitedHealthcare to help UnitedHealthcare veteran members access social programs that may improve their overall health and well-being.

American Legion members who are also UnitedHealthcare members will now have additional help accessing its veteran-specific referral network and concierge services, focused on connecting veterans with food, transportation and other services, as well as UnitedHealthcare's health benefit plans.

"For 101 years, The American Legion has supported veterans and their specific needs," American Legion National Commander James "Bill" Oxford said. "Through this corporate alliance, our members as well as our service officers who are UnitedHealthcare members will have additional information on how to access resources beyond health-care benefits that can significantly improve their whole-person hrealth and well-being. It will allow them to help their fellow Legionnaires in need of assistance. We are pleased to join with UnitedHealthcare to ensure our nation's veterans get the assistance they need and have earned through their service to our country."

In 2021, UnitedHealthcare will offer its Medicare Advantage Patriot plan that allows members to visit physicians and health-care professionals from within its Medicare Advantage Network – the nation's largest* – for a $0 monthly premium, with many including a Part B premium rebate – up to $100 per month. The Medicare Advantage plan combines Medicare parts A and B into one plan and offers benefits and services that Original Medicare doesn't cover, such as vision, hearing, dental care, fitness memberships, telehealth visits and more. Plans are also available with prescription drug coverage.

Together, The American Legion and UnitedHealthcare hope to work together to ensure our veteran members have access to resources that can help them with social determinants of health needs as well as care that improves whole-person health and well-being. The addition of UnitedHealthcare's veteran-specific referral network and concierge services means American Legion volunteers will be able to provide at-risk veterans with personalized services where they live.

"UnitedHealthcare currently refers our members to over 150,000 national service programs and over 10,000 veteran-specific programs," said Sheila Shapiro, senior vice president of National Strategic Partnerships for UnitedHealthcare. "Our veterans have sacrificed so much to serve this country, and this relationship gives us the opportunity to better serve them, especially in supporting their unique needs both within and outside the clinical setting."

Learn more about UnitedHealthcare at **uhc.com**.

** Plans are insured through UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company or one of its affiliated companies. For Medicare Advantage and Prescription Drug Plans: A Medicare Advantage organization with a Medicare contract and a Medicare-approved Part D sponsor. Enrollment in these plans depends on the plan's contract renewal with Medicare. The American Legion is not an insurer and does not endorse or recommend particular products to individuals. UnitedHealthcare provides financial support to The American Legion for the sponsorship. You do not have to be a veteran to be eligible for the Medicare Advantage Patriot plan. Benefits and features vary by plan/area. Limitations and exclusions apply.*

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MEDIA

ICYMI: Check out latest guests on Tango Alpha Lima podcast

The American Legion's podcast, Tango Alpha Lima, is growing strongly six months after its launch. Weekly episodes rotate between a special guest interview and the podcast's co-hosts discussing the hottest stories of interest to veterans and the military community.

All episodes are archived and available at podcast apps such as iTunes, Spotify, Stitcher and others. They're also posted online at **legion.org/tangoalphalima**, with links to the video versions on The American Legion's YouTube channel.

Catch up with special guests from the past couple of months, including:

- **Episode 24:** Anighya Crocker reflects on his experience as 2016 Boys Nation president, as well as being an opera singer, classical conductor and history major at Vanderbilt University. Tune in to learn about his political ambitions.
- **Episode 22:** Join co-producer Jesse Moss and delegate Steven Garza for a behind-the-scenes look at the award-winning Texas Boys State documentary "Boys State."
- **Episode 20:** Marine Corps veteran Tanner Iskra, host of VA's Borne the Battle podcast, discusses Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, his background as a combat videographer and more.

Be sure to share, rate and review the podcast so that others with an interest in military topics, veterans issues and patriotism can find Tango Alpha Lima.

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CAREERS

Tell your career stories

The art of storytelling is one of the best ways to strengthen your interview performance. Rather than just sharing the facts of your career, embed that information into relatable stories and you'll be able to engage your audience on a much deeper level.

What's more, stories are easy to remember and will stick with your audience much longer. They can spark interest, persuade and, most importantly, demonstrate that you are the right candidate for the job opportunity.

Consider this framework for powerful storytelling during an interview:

- **Prepare.** Review the job posting to determine the key responsibilities and identify four to six of your top accomplishments, contributions or projects that demonstrate your proficiency in those functions. It's best to write out your stories so you can practice them multiple times before your actual interview.
- **Use a story structure.** Your stories should be comprised of three key components: 1) the work situation, challenge or project; 2) what you were responsible for and how well you did it; and 3) the results you delivered and/or contributed.

Here's a brief example for a job seeker who was asked if he had experience in controlling inventory costs. Rather than a quick "yes," he responded, "When I arrived at (current company), it was plagued with huge inventory-cost overrides. My team and I conducted an extensive root cause analysis, identified problem areas, helped implement new inventory management software, and delivered a 23 percent reduction in inventory costs in the first year. In the second year, we reduced costs an additional 9 percent, all of which contributed to a much stronger financial picture for our manufacturing operation."

- **Be succinct.** Your job stories must be short and to the point. Reread the example above and you'll see that it's only three sentences, yet it tells a compelling story. My motto is, "Tell the whole story, but in half the words." Use that to guide you in developing your own stories.

A good story inspires action, which in this situation is either an invitation for a second interview or, even better, a job offer. Once you have the job, use storytelling to demonstrate your value during your performance reviews. Let your stories give you the power to succeed.

Wendy Enelow is a master résumé writer and author of "Expert Résumé & LinkedIn Profiles for Managers & Executives" and other titles.
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ECONOMY

IRS sends Austrians COVID-19 stimulus checks

More than 100 Austrian citizens living in Austria received coronavirus stimulus checks from the United States, *Politico* reports.

Each check was worth at least $1,200, and many of them have been cashed at Austrian banks. The checks were distributed to cushion the blow caused by government-ordered shutdowns of business, commercial and cultural activity in the wake of COVID-19 – but they were supposed to go to Americans.

Austrian financial and banking officials suspect that some recipients in their country "had at one point been U.S. taxpayers, while others, including some former *au pairs*, had lived in the U.S. for some time," according to *Politico*. However, at least one Austrian man reports that his wife received a stimulus check without having ever traveled to the United States.

EDUCATION

Multiple GI Bill benefits

Q: *My dad is 100 percent disabled and transferred his VA educational benefits to me to attend college. As a result, I am eligible for Chapter 35 Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance, along with Chapter 33 Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits. I will enroll at a university next spring. Given that I am entitled to both educational benefits, is it possible to receive both while attending the same college?*

A: When students complete their applications, they must determine which GI Bill benefit they would like to receive first, since a student may only use one benefit at a time. There are many factors to consider in deciding which educational benefit to use before attending a university. Chapter 35 will pay students a monthly housing allowance (MHA). With the MHA, students must pay for their tuition, fees and books. They also are entitled to obtain 36 months of full-time benefits. However, this particular benefit must be used by their 26th birthday.

Chapter 33 will pay an MHA according to where a student resides. VA will pay tuition and provide a $1,000 per year stipend for books. Students also receive 36 months of full-time benefits.

For more on education benefits and comparison by schools, go to **va.gov/gi-bill-comparison-tool**.

Valerie Heffner is a Marine Corps veteran and member of American Legion Post 27 in Apache Junction, Ariz. ***askvalerie@legion.org***

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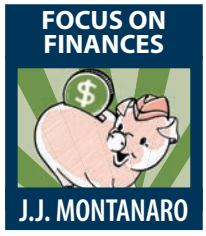
PERSONAL FINANCE

Go lean for the holidays



This year I've heard stories of people gaining the "COVID 15." I've experienced it myself. For many of us, an overabundance of stress leads to an overabundance of consumption, in several areas of our lives. Not only does uncertainty trigger unhealthy eating habits, it also triggers damaging spending habits.

If ever there was a year to navigate the holidays in a prudent manner, this is it. The following tips will keep you on course when it comes to eating and spending. The payoff? Starting 2021 without needing to add weight or debt reduction to your New Year's resolutions.

- **Plan wisely.** Establishing a daily meal plan and sticking to it can help you navigate a minefield of eating opportunities. To stay financially fit, put a cap on your holiday spending too, by figuring out how much you can afford to spend for gifts before you shop. Ideally, you're shopping with money you've already set aside, but make a commitment to shop within your means, and keep detailed records.
- **Make a list.** If you don't buy that pie at the grocery store, it won't add to your waistline. Likewise, if you can resist impulse buys you won't add to your debt load. It's true that the music, aroma of holiday goodies and festive atmosphere can derail even the best-laid plans. So protect your stomach and your wallet by sticking to your list and not adding to it twice.
- **Maintain control.** Success in the battle of the bulge has a lot to do with creating guardrails. Often, this means taking simple steps such as eating healthy meals at home rather than racking up calories out on the town. Such maneuvers also work on the financial front. One of the best guardrails is to shop using cash only. Credit cards provide the greatest opportunity to spend what you don't have or didn't plan on. Sticking to cash helps you stay in control. When it's gone, you're done.
- **Be creative.** Whether you're taking the stairs instead of the elevator to burn calories, or looking for ways to finish the holidays with no more debt than you started with, put your imagination to good use. On the gift front, it could be baked goods, coupons for services (can you say "parents' night out"?), or even cool photos that capture an important moment or friendship. And what's wrong with drawing names? This may not work for kids, but for grown-ups like you and me, it means picking a special gift for that family member and spending less all around.
- **Don't buy what you don't need.** Whether it's groceries or gifts, we all have fallen into the trap of "if it's on sale, buy it." This year, safeguard your diet and your budget with this qualifier: it has to be on your list. Try to purchase stuff that you intended to buy anyway while it's on sale. Don't expand your shopping spree just because something seems like a good deal. Doing so is a recipe for extra calories and extra spending.

Incorporate these techniques, and you'll be smiling all the way through the holidays and right into the new year – without a big chunk of new debt or extra pounds. And remember, it's not too early to start saving for next year.

J.J. Montanaro is a certified financial planner with USAA, The American Legion's preferred provider of financial services. Submit questions for him online.

legion.org/usaa/focusonfinances

ENTERTAINMENT

"If we have to say goodbye to movie theaters until there's a widely available vaccine, then I think it's just possible we'll be saying goodbye to movie theaters, period."

Owen Gleiberman, chief film critic for *Variety*, on what he calls an "existential crisis" for moviegoing. Cinema chains have reported hundreds of millions of dollars in losses as auditoriums sit empty during the COVID-19 pandemic. Source: *Variety*

ENTERTAINMENT

Best guess

The North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores used the government-mandated COVID-19 shutdown as an opportunity to clean up a waterfall exhibit patrons had used as a wishing well over the years.

As NPR reports, the project ended up helping pay bills. After draining the waterfall and dredging all the pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters – and pacifiers, golf balls, beads, shells, necklaces and toys – used to make wishes over the previous 14 years, the aquarium's staff was left with 100 gallons of coins. They cleaned, dried, sorted and counted them, then held a contest and invited the museum's Facebook followers to guess how many dollars and cents all those coins equalled. The answer: $8,563.71. As the *Raleigh News & Observer* reports, more than 2,500 people made their best guess, with the winner guessing $8,562 – less than a dollar off.

LAW AND ORDER

Police presence

59% Hispanic-Americans who want police to maintain current levels of presence in their neighborhoods

61% Black Americans who want police to maintain current levels of presence in their neighborhoods

63% Asian-Americans who want police to maintain current levels of presence in their neighborhoods

71% White Americans who want police to maintain current levels of presence in their neighborhoods

Source: Gallup

Pixabay

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How to submit a reunion

The American Legion Magazine publishes reunion notices for veterans. Send notices to ***The American Legion Magazine,* Attn: Reunions, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206,** fax **(317) 630-1280,** e-mail **reunions@legion.org** or submit information via our website, **www.legion.org/reunions.**

Include the branch of service and complete name of the group, no abbreviations, with your request. The listing also should include the reunion dates and city, along with a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Listings are publicized free of charge.

Your notice will appear on our Web site within a week and will remain available online until the final day of your reunion. Upon submission, please allow three months for your reunion to be published in print. **Due to the large number of reunions, *The American Legion Magazine* will publish a group's listing only once a year.** Notices should be sent at least six months prior to the reunion to ensure timely publication.

Other notices

"In Search Of" is a means of getting in touch with people from your unit to plan a reunion. **We do not publish listings that seek people for interviews, research purposes, military photos or help in filing a VA claim.** Listings must include the name of the unit from which you seek people, the time period and the location, as well as a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Send notices to ***The American Legion Magazine,* Attn: "In Search Of," P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206,** fax **(317) 630-1280** or e-mail **reunions@legion.org.**

The magazine will not publish names of individuals, only the name of the unit. Listings are published free of charge.

Life Membership notices are published for Legionnaires who have been awarded life memberships by their posts. **This does not include a member's own Paid-Up-For-Life membership.** Notices must be submitted on official forms, which may be obtained by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to ***The American Legion Magazine,* Attn: Life Memberships, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.**

"Comrades in Distress" listings must be approved by the Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation division. If you are seeking to verify an injury received during service, contact your Legion department service officer for information on how to publish a notice.

To respond to a "Comrades in Distress" listing, send a letter to ***The American Legion Magazine,* Attn: Comrades in Distress, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.** Include the listing's CID number in your response.

"Taps" notices are published only for Legionnaires who served as department commanders or national officers.

ARMY

1438th Trans Co, Hartsville, IN, 6/12, Kevin Blair, (812) 379-8645, kblair62@gmail.com

NAVY

***Conserver* ARS 39,** Virginia Beach, VA, 4/28-5/2, Dale Hower, (619) 449-4499, dcwoodworking1@yahoo.com; ***Patrick Henry* SSBN 599,** Kings Bay, GA, 11/4-7, Ron Pelletier, (508) 769-2360, rpelle9011@aol.com; ***Salisbury Sound* AV 13,** San Diego, 8/22-26, Victor Fischer, (630) 257-2710, duffer664@sbcglobal.net; ***Yellowstone* AD 27,** Branson, MO, 9/20-24, Karen Bowen, (603) 948-2821, pkbowen@atlanticbb.com

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Post 90, MI: Robert F. Carlton

IN SEARCH OF

2nd Msl Bn 82nd Arty (Corporal Msl), (Kitzingen, Germany, 1961-1963), Michael Detorie, (443) 825-6239

33rd & 76th Air Sea Rescue Service (Okinawa, 1960-1962), Douglas Lee, (843) 307-7927, beckbeckl@aol.com

493rd Field Arty (WWII), Bill Vosseler, (610) 558-2163, hellcatnews@yahoo.com

505th MP Bn A Co (The Presidio, San Francisco, 1954-1957), Bob Clark, (508) 361-4877, clarkrg5@aol.com

575th Trans Co (Caserma Carlo Ederle, Italy), Fred Dintino, (215) 643-7970, fdintino@verizon.net

7232nd MMGP Det 1400 (Kerpen/Nörvenich, Germany, 1963-1966), Robert Chadwick, chaddad45@roadrunner.com

A Co 4th Bn 10th Inf 193rd Inf Bde (1970), Calvin Schrage, (402) 467-1793, calvin.schrage50@gmail.com

Plt 1035 1st Recruit Tng Bn RTR (MCRD San Diego, 1977), David Yocom, weekdayviews@gmail.com

VP-10 (NAS Brunswick, ME, 1966-1969), Bob Pavlovic, (716) 331-2226, rhpav646@gmail.com

TAPS

Mark E. Barker, Dept. of Oklahoma. Nat'l Sec. Cncl. Memb. 2015-2016 and 2019-2020.

James E. Brimer, Dept. of Arkansas. Dept. Cmdr. 1989-1990.

Ernest H. Cooper, Dept. of Kansas. Dept. Cmdr. 2005-2006, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Alt. Memb. 2006-2008, Nat'l Sec. Cmsn. Memb. 2006-2007, Nat'l Sec. Cncl. Memb. 2013-2020 and Nat'l Sec. Cncl. Vice Chmn. 2007-2013.

John P. Curran, Dept. of Massachusetts. Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1997-2013 and Nat'l Veterans Affairs & Rehab. Cncl. Memb. 2013-2019.

Lawrence M. Norton, Dept. of Massachusetts. Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Vice Chmn. 2004-2013 and Nat'l Veterans Affairs & Rehab. Cncl. Memb. 2013-2019.

CANCELED REUNIONS

If your military reunion has been canceled, let us know by sending an email to **reunions@legion.org**. For a list of canceled reunions, go to **legion.org/reunions/canceled**. If your military reunion is going virtual, post a listing at **legion.org/reunions** or send an email to **reunions@legion.org**.

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700 N. Pennsylvania St. | P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

(Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685)

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Publisher: Jeffrey Stoffer,
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700 N. Pennsylvania St.,
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

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Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

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a. Total number of copies printed	1,754,295	1,735,496
b. Paid and/or requested circulation		
1.Paid/Requested outside-county subscriptions stated on Form 3541	1,744,726	1,726,089
2. Paid in-county subscriptions	0	0
3. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales, and other non-USPS paid distribution	4,247	4,228
4. Other classes mailed through the USPS	0	0
c. Total paid and/or requested circulation *(Sum of 15b (1),(2),(3), and (4))*	1,748,973	1,730,317
d. Free distribution by mail		
1. Outside-county as stated on Form 3541	4,703	4,563
2. In-county as stated on Form 3541	0	0
3.Other classes mailed through the USPS	0	0
e. Free distribution outside the mail	0	0
f. Total Free distribution *(Sum of 15d and 15e)*	4,703	4,563
g. Total distribution *(Sum of 15c and 15f)*	1,753,675	1,734,880
h. Copies not distributed	619	616
i. Total (Sum of 15g and h)	1,754,295	1,735,496
j. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation	99.73	99.74

I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete.

Jeffrey Stoffer, Publisher

You know you're getting old when Santa starts looking younger.

WHY DO Dasher and Dancer enjoy coffee so much? Because they're Santa's star bucks.

A LOCAL NEWSCASTER stood in a crowd of parade watchers, welcoming Santa Claus as he arrived in town. In a live interview, he asked a 4-year-old girl if she had talked with this Santa yet to give him her Christmas list.

"No" she said emphatically.

"Are you going to talk with Santa Claus?" the newscaster pressed.

"No!"

"Why not?"

"Because the real Santa is at the mall."

A COLLEGE STUDENT stayed up late studying for his zoology exam the next day. As he entered the classroom, he saw 10 stands with 10 birds on them, with a sack over each bird and only the legs showing. The professor announced that the test would be to look at each set of bird legs and give the common name, habitat and genus.

The student looked at the legs, but they all looked the same to him. The more he thought about it, the angrier he got. Finally, he marched to the professor's desk and exclaimed, "What a stupid test! How can anyone tell the difference between birds by looking at their legs?" He threw his test on the desk and stomped to the door.

The class was so big that the professor didn't know everyone's name, so as the student reached the door, he called out, "What's your name?"

The enraged student pulled up his pant legs and yelled, "You guess, buddy! You guess!"

"Pencil."

"This is my social-distancing support animal."

"This business of entering people's houses through the chimney has got to stop!"

A MAN once sent Christmas cards with nothing but 25 letters of the alphabet. When friends admitted they hadn't understood the message, he pointed to the card and said, "Look! No 'L.'"

AN ARMY RECRUIT was assigned guard duty at 2 a.m., but couldn't help nodding off. He awakened to find the officer of the day standing before him. Remembering the penalty for sleeping on duty, he kept his head bowed for another moment, then looked up reverently and said, "Amen."

EDUCATION can get you the only thing that really matters in today's world: an assigned parking space.

"HALLOWEEN is the beginning of the holiday shopping season. That's for women. The beginning of the holiday shopping season for men is Christmas Eve." – *David Letterman*

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